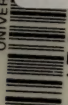


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HISTORY OF IRELAND.

VOL. I.





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# HISTORY OF IRELAND

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES  
TO THE PRESENT DAY

BY

REV. E. A. D'ALTON, M.R.I.A.

*IN THREE VOLUMES*

VOLUME I.

From the Earliest Times to the Year 1547

*SECOND EDITION.*

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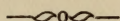
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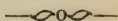
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## PREFACE.



IT is an old story and a true one that Irishmen have not studied and do not study the history of their own country. The omission to do so was intelligible in the past, when such study was proscribed, and when the rhymer and the story-teller were equally banned by law. But these days are past, and while there is little encouragement given to the study of Irish history, as compared to other branches of knowledge, there is at least no prohibition. Irishmen may learn its facts if they will, but they are not willing, and there are few countries in the world where the people are so ignorant of their country's history. For the mass of the people the rath and mound and dun have no significance, and the old Norman castle and the roofless abbey, under the shadow of which the dead take their rest, are heedlessly passed by, and nothing is known of the story which they tell. Even those writers and speakers who sometimes dwell upon the past, and call back the heroes of their nation from the land of shadows do not speak or write from out the fullness of knowledge. On the contrary, their knowledge is often misty and dim, and they are ignorant of many things in the lives of those very men whose memories they invoke.

This ignorance of a subject which every Irishman should take pains to know is often attributed, in part at least, to the character of the histories that have been written, and, without

injustice, it may be admitted that they leave much to be desired. Nor need this be a matter for surprise. So many of the facts of Irish history are controverted, so many distorted by prejudice or interest, round so many events such fierce passions have played, that to discover the exact truth and to be courageous enough to tell it is not so easy as it may seem. Belonging to one or other of the parties or creeds that have been in such bitter conflict, the historians on both sides have inherited and felt the animosities of their ancestors, and forgetting that their duty was to tell the truth, they have degenerated into advocates and partisans, and in their pages the envenomed contests of the past are repeated and renewed.

This volume is not written on these lines. It is hoped it will be found accurate. Amid discouragements and difficulties which some of my readers will understand, no pains have been spared to discover the truth, and when discovered it has been told. There is neither interpolation nor suppression; as nothing is added nothing is concealed. I hope it will also be found readable, for there is little use in writing, however accurately, if what is written be not read. To put down facts correctly in regular order and without comment of any kind would be to write as an annalist rather than a historian. But while I have not refrained from passing judgment on men and things, I have done so only on the facts as they occurred; I have avoided speculation, and have not thought it necessary to write of what might have been, but have dealt only with what was.

Thomas Davis, in one of his essays, gave his ideas of what an Irish history should be. He was a man of great capacity, and had he lived might have written such a History himself, but those of us with less capacity must be content with a lower standard of excellence. On one point, however, I have endeavoured to follow his advice and, that is—to avoid bigotry of race or creed. As between England and Ireland, there was no room for such differences until the twelfth century, the previous portion of Irish history being concerned with the triumphs of Ireland in religion and learning and with the struggle against the Danes

—perhaps the most interesting portion, as it is the most glorious. Nor did the religious differences with England arise until towards the close of the reign of Henry VIII., and is, therefore, little dealt with in this volume. But the race hatred existed from the first, or rather the contempt of the English for the Irish, which was even more galling than their hate. In the proscription of Irish customs and language and laws, in the denial to them of the status of English subjects or the protection of English law, that contempt was shown. For so much the English, or rather the Anglo-Irish lords who acted in their name, deserve censure. Yet it ought not be forgotten that these ages were ages of violence, when, regardless of right or wrong, the stronger prevailed and the weaker was overborne.

And if the Irish were wronged and robbed and if they lost their liberties, were they not themselves largely to blame? Those who would be free must be prepared to defend their freedom. They must make sacrifices, they must discipline their strength, they must learn even from their foes. Had the Irish done this it is probable that not all the power of England could have subdued them. If they had, says Mr. Froude, any real genuine national spirit they would have pushed “the pitiful handful of English into the sea.” But they had not. They talked rather than acted; they could not but fail, for they took no pains to succeed; and while Scotland, with a less population and a country poorer and less in extent, was able to meet, and sometimes to defeat, the whole power of England, Ireland was kept for centuries, not in order but in awe, by an army contemptible in its strength which never numbered more than a few hundred men. It was not that she wanted soldiers, or that they were unable or unwilling to fight, for the Irish soldier, trained, disciplined and capably led, is equal to the first soldier in the world, and has proved this on many a battlefield. But they were undisciplined, inferior in arms, incapably led; their chiefs quarrelled and thought not of their country but of their clans. It was not, therefore, the strength of England, but rather the weakness and folly of Ireland, which led to the loss of her liberty. Nor is there any

reason in concealing these facts ; and if the English adventurers deserve to be censured for their rapacity, the Irish deserve to be censured for their folly.

A History which is a record of many and repeated failures is not, perhaps, an attractive study, but, for Irishmen especially, it is a study which deserves attention. Experience is often a dear school in which to learn, but there is no school which teaches more valuable lessons, and what is history but the experience of the past ? And the Irish of the present day have much need to learn and would do well to seek for guidance from the past. In the twelfth century, except a few seaport towns which were colonised by Danes, all Ireland was in the hands of one race. War and conquest, and persecution and proscription, and confiscation and plantations have since supervened ; the original race has largely disappeared ; and Norman and Saxon, and English Protestant and Scotch Presbyterian have inherited their fields. But the conquerors have often been absorbed by the conquered ; and in the vast majority of the Irish of the present day we can still trace the faults and the virtues of the original Celtic race. The want of initiative in the mass of the people, their utter helplessness without capable leadership, their reluctance to combine for any purpose, their want of foresight, their inability to take pains, their instability and infirmness of purpose—have not these characteristics appeared in the twentieth century as well as in the twelfth ? And others might be added which the passing centuries have brought, for if the cruel trials through which the people have passed have accentuated and developed some of their finer qualities and have even added to them, there are points also in which the people's character has suffered. Are not these defects of character still operative for evil ? The government is more tolerant, the laws juster than they were, yet the country does not prosper and the people are still flying from it as if from a plague-stricken land. It would be well for Irishmen to ask is there not something amiss with themselves. It is a healthy sign for a nation to discover its faults and to set right what is wrong, and that nation is doomed which neglects to learn.



With the submission of the Irish chiefs to Henry VIII. we have reached a period when the relations between England and Ireland seem to have become simplified. Unfortunately for both countries, these relations became complicated and embittered by religious differences. How the Irish suffered and struggled under these new conditions remains to be told in the succeeding volumes.

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## PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

*BY HIS GRACE THE MOST REV. DR. HEALY.*

---

SOME people may be disposed to ask if there was really need of a new History of Ireland, seeing that there are so many already in the hands of the public. Yet it is difficult, if not impossible, to find a really good history of our country—what might be fairly described as an all-round good history—full, accurate, well-written and impartial. If the Rev. Mr. D'Alton has not yet accomplished this task, he has certainly made a praiseworthy beginning. This is the first volume of what is intended to be a three volume work, giving a complete history of Ireland from its remotest origins down to our time. It is an ambitious task, which cannot be accomplished without much learning, courage and perseverance. We earnestly hope that Father D'Alton may hereafter be induced to undertake a complete history of his native Province or his native Diocese. For such a work he is certainly well qualified, for this first volume of his general history gives evidence that he possesses the most essential qualities of an historical writer. His style is easy and limpid; in description, as well as in narration, he is vivid and frequently picturesque; he possesses the critical faculty in a high degree; and holds the scales of historical justice with an even hand. Moreover he is a painstaking writer in verifying his authorities; he has the great advantage of a good knowledge of the Gaelic tongue, which enables him to consult for himself the original sources of our earlier history; and he has not failed to utilize all the State Papers and other official documents, which the nineteenth century has produced in such profusion.

The time is eminently favourably for such a work as this. The Gaelic revival is still a rising tide, and young Irishmen, and Irishwomen also, are anxiously seeking for authoritative information on the history, the literature, the language, and the antiquities of their country. Here they will find a work that will go far to satisfy their requirements in these respects, and we have no doubt that many of them will eagerly avail themselves of the opportunities that it offers. Father D'Alton bears a name not unknown in historic studies. He deserves personally great credit for devoting himself with so much ardour to the study of his country's history in the midst of his hard labours as a missionary priest. We earnestly hope the favourable reception of this first volume of his history will encourage him to complete the work, and in this we should naturally expect the sympathy and co-operation of all his fellow-countrymen.

✠ JOHN HEALY, Archbishop of Tuam.





## ERRATA.

Page 164 last line, omit second *in*.

„ 185 line 17, for Desmond read Thomond.

„ 227 line 17, for Desmond, read Thomond.

„ 297 line 18, for Ballintubber, read Ballinrobe.

„ 361 line 21, for Desmond, read Ormond.



# HISTORY OF IRELAND.



## CHAPTER I.

### *Introductory.*

To what extent Ireland was known to the Ancients—To the Phœnicians—Herodotus—Festus Avienus—Pliny—Strabo—Cæsar—Ptolemy—Tacitus—Its various names.

THE Phœnicians at an early age, perhaps as early as the foundation of Carthage (the middle of the ninth century B.C.) had planted colonies on the shores of Spain. These colonists, filled with the adventurous spirit of their ancestors, had passed beyond the Pillars of Hercules, reached Britain, and discovered the tin mines at its southern extremity. To supply from these newly discovered mines the ports of the Mediterranean with tin, they found to be a lucrative employment, especially as long as they enjoyed a monopoly of the trade. To preserve that monopoly they kept the position of Britain a secret, and all that other nations knew either of Britain or Ireland was that in some far distant part of the Western sea were the Cassiterides or Tin Islands, so distant and difficult of access that only Phœnician energy and skill in navigation could reach them. At a later date, Herodotus had heard that towards the north-west of Europe there was a river called Eridanus, which emptied itself into the sea and from which amber was said to come, but he did not seem to believe that there was any sea on that side of Europe, and, as to the Cassiterides or Tin Islands, he had heard of them and knew they supplied the south of Europe with tin, but of their position he had no knowledge. Both Britain and Ireland were shrouded in impenetrable gloom, and on the map of the world as known to

him they found no place.\* The Carthaginians were as daring, as skilful in navigation, and as keenly anxious to acquire wealth by commerce as their kinsmen of Spain or Phœnicia, and in an expedition under Hamilco they discovered those famous Tin Islands which they had long sought for in vain. And, as a result, Festus Avienus wrote a description of the maritime coasts of the Atlantic (350 B.C.), and declared that at a distance of two days' sail from Britain was the sacred Isle of the Hibernians.† The Greek colonists of Marseilles followed in the wake of the Carthaginians, and the Romans followed the Greeks, but what the Romans knew of Ireland was little. Pliny maintained ‡ that it was part of Britain and not a distinct island, and that in length it was 600 miles and that its breadth was just half its length. The statement of Strabo, who wrote in Greek, is that there are some islands round Britain, one of great extent called Ierna, lying parallel to it towards the north, but that he had nothing certain to relate about it except that its inhabitants are more savage than the Britons, feeding on human flesh, and enormous eaters, deeming it commendable to devour their deceased fathers and having intercourse with their sisters and even with their mothers.¶ How little worthy of credence this statement is, can be gathered from his own words, for he relates it "perhaps without any very competent authority" and because "to eat human flesh is said to be a Scythian custom." Cæsar came nearer to Ireland than either of these writers, yet he knew but little of it and all he could say was that it was an island situated to the west of Britain and about half its size.\*\* Of its coast-line, of its harbours and bays, of its climate and soil, of its productions, of its inhabitants and of their cannibalism and immorality, of which Strabo writes—on all these subjects he is silent.

The scattered rays of light which had been cast on Western Europe by his predecessors enabled Ptolemy to repeat the information given us by Cæsar. But he does little more than this, and on his map the position of Ireland is inaccurately given. He places it too far north, so that its extreme south is farther north than the northernmost point of Wales. The Cassiterides, or Tin Islands, meant perhaps for the Scilly Isles, are placed hard by the north coast of Spain, and far distant from the south coast of Britain, and North Britain, or Scotland, is bent east, and no part of it is as far north as the northernmost part of

\* *Herodotus*, Book III., Chap. 115:

† Lingard's *History of England* (10 vols.), Vol. I., p. 17:

‡ Pliny. Book IV., Chap. 30.

¶ Strabo, *Geography*, Book IV., Chap. 5:

\*\* Cæsar, *De Bello Gallico*. Book V:

Ireland. And the coast-line of Ireland is very inaccurately defined. That portion of the south-west which advances into the Atlantic is wanting; there is no trace of Galway Bay or the mouth of the Shannon; Donegal Bay is but imperfectly apparent, nor is there any part of Ireland which corresponds to Ptolemy's northern promontary, which juts out into the Atlantic, sharp and narrow.\*

Agricola marched farther north than any who went before him; the Caledonian coast looking towards Ireland was lined with his troops; and he entertained thoughts of conquering Ireland itself, believing that it would contribute to the tranquility of Britain. For the Britons, he thought, would lose courage and cease to fight, when they saw the last refuge of liberty in the West invaded, and Ireland reduced to the position of a Roman province, the last spark of liberty would be extinguished round their coasts. He had parleyed with an Irish chief, who, like MacMurrough at a later age, had been expelled from his own country and sought in his difficulties for aid from foreign arms. From the information supplied by this exiled chief, added to what the Romans already knew, Tacitus was able to say that Ireland was less in size than Britain, but larger than any island in the Mediterranean, that its coasts and harbours were well known to foreign merchants and traders, and that in soil and climate, in the manners and genius of its inhabitants, it differed little from Britain. But his placing it between Britain and Spain shows how inaccurate was his knowledge of its true position and how little the Romans had explored these Western islands and seas.†

Among ancient writers Festus Avienus alone speaks of the Sacred Isle of the Hibernians, but in what the isle was sacred does not appear. Diodorus Siculus gave it the name of Irin and a modern historian (Lingard) suggests that the word *irin* may be confounded with *ieran*, signifying sacred in the Greek language. By Strabo, and long after him by Claudian, Ireland was called Ierna, by Ptolemy, Iouerna, and by Solinus, Juverna, and by Orpheus of Cortona, Iernia, all of which names are plainly deducible from a common source. The transition from these words to Hibernia is very easy and natural, though the form used by St. Patrick, viz., Hiberione, is peculiar and rarely used. It was the opinion of Camden that Ierna, or Hibernia, signifies a Western country and there is undoubtedly an Irish word—Iar—which means west; others derive the name from Heber,

\* *Vid. Ancient Classical Atlases:*

† Tacitus, *Agricola*. Chap. XXIV. Perhaps his thus placing Ireland accounts for the following words—"melius aditus portusque per commercia et negotiatores cogniti."



one of the sons of Milesius ; others still affirm that the word is of Phœnician origin and signifies the remotest habitation. With sound sense, Ware has observed,\* that these observations on the etymology of the word are so much guess-work, that to give a true account of the name is difficult, and that, for himself, he would affirm nothing positive, but leave the matter undetermined.

For ages, down to the eleventh century, Ireland bore the name of Scotia, a name which is often derived from a Scythian source, the opinion being that if the Scythians were not the first of its inhabitants, they were at least among the first, and have thus left their impress on its name. But there are others who think the name Scotia comes from Scota, the wife of Gadelius, a lady who is reputed to be the daughter of Pharaoh, while there are yet others who hold the opinion that the word comes from the Greek word σκοτος, which signifies darkness, possibly, says Harris, because of its dark aspect, being anciently overgrown with woods. Another name which it bore, and which still survives in a slightly altered form, was Irlandia, which is taken to mean the land of Ir, the first of the sons of Milesius, who was buried in the island. It was also called Fidh-Innis, or woody island, and Innis-Elga, from the name borne by the wife of Partholon. By Plutarch, and after him by O'Flaherty, the island was called Ogygia, a word which signifies very ancient, and if, says Camden, what the Irish writers relate be credited, Ireland was not without good reason called Ogygia by Plutarch, for the Irish begin their histories from the earliest accounts of time, so that, in comparison, the antiquity of all other countries is in its infancy.†

The last name that need be mentioned is Innisfail, a name which, in poetry especially, has survived. This name it got from a fatal stone called Liafail, which was carried to Ireland by the Tuatha de Danaans. It was called the stone of destiny and upon it kings of the Scythian race were always crowned. Long preserved in Ireland with the greatest care, it was taken to Scotland at a date not known. At Scone, in that country, it long continued, and each Scottish king was crowned upon it, until, finally, it was carried (1296) to Westminster, where it was made part of the coronation chair, and has been so used since then. The Liafail was the stone of destiny, and the island in which it was first preserved and venerated was the Isle of Destiny, or Innisfail.‡

\* Harris's *Ware*, Vol. II., p. 3:

† Harris's *Ware*, Vol. II., p. 9.

‡ *Ibidem*, p. 10.





## CHAPTER. II.

### *The Earliest Inhabitants of Ireland.*

Different Colonies—The Migdonians—The Nemedians—The Fomorians—  
The Dannaans—The Firbolgs.

THE story that Ireland was peopled before the Deluge may be set down as a fiction, and the story that it was peopled in the time of Abraham almost equally improbable. This Colony, it is said, came from Migdonia, or Macedonia in Greece, numbered 1000 and was under the leadership of Parthalon. For three centuries they occupied Ireland, and then the whole colony, numbering 2000, perished of a plague. In the pathetic words of one historian "not one was left alive"; and this is all the chroniclers have to say of Parthalon and his people.

For thirty years the land was uninhabited and then a fresh colony came. Keating says\* that the new-comers were related to their predecessors, the Migdonians, and spoke the same tongue, that they came by sea, starting from the Euxine in 34 vessels, each vessel manned by 30 persons, the whole expedition being under Nemedius, who was eleventh in descent from Noah. They landed at Inverscene, in the West of Munster, about B.C. 1900. While they occupied the country they cut down and cleared several forests, built several forts, and fought several battles. If such a people existed at all, all this may be readily believed, but when we are furthermore gravely assured that in their time several lakes burst forth, it is natural that scepticism should begin to assert itself. There is indeed an old tradition that at some remote period Lough Neagh has been thus formed, and this tradition may have some foundation in fact, but, as to any other lake in Ireland being at any time so formed, both history and tradition are mute. That several places were cleared of the trees with which they were covered is not unlikely, for Ireland abounded in forests and if these Nemedians lived by agriculture the land should necessarily be cleared before it was tilled. If

\* *History of Ireland* (O'Connor's Trans.), p. 73:

they were shepherds the same necessity existed, for they should have a free passage from one district to another so as to have the desired change of pasture for their flocks and herds. And they should also erect forts or strong places. In a primitive society, where law is not respected and force is the rule of human justice, it becomes necessary that men should combine for mutual protection and defence. The savage, as well as the civilized, have their women and children to guard, and must have a place of strength and safety which they can easily defend against external assault, and from the shelter of which they can issue forth and attack their foes. And certain it is that wars were among them. The passions from which conflicts spring are not peculiar to primitive man, and amongst all nations there have been wars. Yet, if these Nemedians fought among themselves and wasted their strength in internal discord, it suited them ill, for their united energies were required against a formidable foe.

These enemies, who incessantly attacked them, were a people called the Fomorians. It is the opinion of O'Flaherty\* that they were from Norway and Denmark; Keating† is sure they were from Africa; both agree that they were pirates whose constant business was war and whose invariable object was plunder. They lived, says the "Annals of Clonmacnoise," by piracy and plunder of other nations, and were very troublesome to the whole world."‡ The testimony of Cambrensis is worth little, but it is that they were giants who were continually making devastations in Ireland.|| As early as the days of Partholon they are said to have fought with his people near Lough Swilly, in Donegal. At Roscommon, at Camross, in Carlow, at Dalriada, in Antrim, they fought with the Nemedians, who each time were the victors. But when Nemedius was dead and his people without a capable leader, the Fomorians renewed the attack. The battle between the rival armies was so obstinate and bloody that they almost annihilated each other. Victory remained with the Fomorians, and now, says the indignant historian (Keating), these vagabond Africans entirely subdued the old inhabitants and made them tributaries.

The small number of the Nemedians who remained were treated so harshly by their Fomorian masters, that the greater part of them finally left Ireland and went back to Greece. But hard as their lot in Ireland was, in Greece it was worse still. Their Grecian masters compelled them—so runs the tale—to dig clay in the fertile valleys, to fill it in leathern bags—whence their

\* *Ogygia*, Part III., Chap. 56.

† *History*, p. 77.

‡ P. 15.

|| *Topography*, Distinction III., Chap. 3.

new name of Firbolgs—and to carry these bags of clay up the mountains, so that the sides and summits of these mountains might be turned from barrenness to fertility.\* After 200 years of miserable servitude, they escaped from their hard task-masters, fitted out a number of vessels and arrived in Ireland about B.C. 1300. The whole country fell into their hands, but they were not destined to possess it long in peace, for another race, more powerful still, soon came to conquer and to rule.

These were the Dannaans, or the Tuatha-de-Dannaans,† to give them their name in full, a branch of the ancient Nemedian colony, who left Ireland about the same time as the Firbolgs. They went first to Denmark, thence to the north of Scotland, and finally landed in Ireland, about 30 years after their Firbolg kin. It was at Moytura, in Mayo, that the issue was decided between these rival races. The Firbolgs were defeated but not annihilated. Some mingled their blood with the Dannaans, some were left in a position of suffragan authority, others crossed over the sea to the Isles of Arran, where for long after they ruled. Tradition still points to the old stone fort of Dun-Engus as the work of their hands, a building rudely but strongly built which after the lapse of so many centuries still stands.

Should anyone assert that the accounts of these various invaders—their voyages, their wanderings and their battles—are nothing more than fables, he might easily be accused of temerity, but, on the other hand, should anyone accept all these stories in full and write them down as history, he might as easily be accused of being over-credulous. In regard to the Fomorians their very existence is at least doubtful, and may even be denied. The tendency of a people is to advance in knowledge with the advance of time, and if these Northmen (assuming that they were from Denmark) knew enough of navigation and war to fight and conquer in Ireland as they are said to have done, and this fifteen centuries before the Christian era, they should have been in the ninth century of the Christian era comparatively civilized. Yet at that date we find them, *i.e.*, the Danes, the most brutal of savages, living upon piracy and plunder and having the utmost contempt for the civilized institutions of more southern lands. As to Africa—Egypt especially—it is unquestioned that even in the most ancient times that country had attained a high degree of culture, and no doubt among the sciences she knew, navigation was one. But it is very doubtful if her ships sailed outside of the Mediterranean, and there is very slender probability that at any time her sons made the acquaintance of Ireland, either in commerce

\* Keating, p. 82.

† *Ogygia*, Part III., Chap. 10. *Annals of the Four Masters*:



or in war. And whatever be the birth-place of the Fomorians, if they lived in Ireland as undisputed rulers for over two centuries, they ought to have left some lasting monument of their existence. Yet, except some vague and shadowy traditions, and the perpetuation of their name in connection with the Giant's Causeway, they have left nothing as an inheritance to after times. And the Nemedians, if regarded in the same light as the Fomorians, will suffer little injustice. Their wanderings and battles are sustained by no probability, and may be classed with the expedition of Jason in search of the Golden Fleece, or the wanderings of Æneas over land and sea.

The origin of the Firbolgs is lost in darkness impervious to the light of history, but we may regard their peculiar labours in Greece and their journey to Ireland as nothing more than the embellishments of fiction. They ought not, however, be classed with the Fomorians or Nemedians, as their claim to existence rests upon more solid grounds. Like the Dannaans, they have always been regarded as a real people, and, in parts of Ireland, there are still existing monuments which tradition has persistently associated with their name.

Efforts have been made to ascertain what the race was to which these Firbolgs belonged, and for this purpose Dr. Wilde had recourse to ethnology. Skeletons long buried in the earth were dug up, and also implements of a very ancient and very primitive kind. With the zeal of an antiquarian and the skill of an anatomist, Wilde examined these ancient remains. Comparing in particular the conformation of the skulls, he concluded that the Firbolgs were Teutonic, small, lively, with aquiline noses, dark complexions and heads of great length from front to back. He also concludes that they used stone and flint hatchets, shell ornaments, stone mills and clay urns, that they came from Norway and Sweden: and that the Dannaans were Celts, who used bronze in their weapons and instruments.\* His industry and research were considerable, but his data were insufficient, his arguments are inconclusive, he takes too much for granted and his conclusions are therefore unreliable. In the living subject, apart from peculiarities of dress or language, men of different races may easily be distinguished, and in the dead subject the flat-nosed negro of the African desert will scarcely be confounded with the dweller on the Yang-tse-Kiang. But the difficulty is great when we have nothing but the skeletons of men belonging to kindred types of the human family, and the difficulty is greater still when these skeletons have been buried in the earth for centuries, for in much less time the original peculiarities of these

\* Davis's *Essays*, p. 84. Dr. Wilde, afterwards Sir W. Wilde, wrote "Lough Corrib" and "The Beauties of the Boyne and Blackwater."

human bones would become so blurred and indistinct as to baffle the best efforts of comparative anatomy.

With at least equal plausibility, it may be conjectured that these Firbolgs were Celts. They are frequently spoken of as Belgæ, and it is significant that in the time of Cæsar, a Celtic people bearing the same name were to be found both in Britain and Gaul. In Britain they dwelt on the south and south-eastern coast. In Gaul they dwelt on the shores of the English Channel, between the Seine and Rhine,\* forming a most effective barrier against the encroachments of the German barbarians. It would not be surprising that this adventurous and daring people, who crossed over to Britain and settled there, should penetrate further north and pass across to Ireland. This much might be expected from a people whose prowess was respected and feared throughout Gaul, and whose desperate valour all but overwhelmed the legions of Cæsar on the banks of the Axona. †

If it is impossible to fix with exactitude the race to which the Firbolgs belonged, it is equally so with the Dannaans. They may have been Teutonic or Celtic; it is impossible to say. That they came to Ireland after the Firbolgs and before the Christian era and that they lived and ruled there, and that the sepulchral monuments of Dowth and New Grange‡ are the work of their hands, it is safer perhaps to admit than deny. By the Firbolgs they were regarded as magicians, but this goes to show not that they were magicians, but that their knowledge was superior to that of the Firbolgs themselves. It is the peculiar tribute which ignorance pays to superior knowledge. All else about them is wrapped in obscurity—the country from which they came, the manner of their coming, the battles they fought, the kings who ruled over them, the chieftains who led them to battle.

It is matter for regret that Cæsar, when in Britain, did not cross over to Ireland, or that Agricola did not attempt to carry out his boastful threat that he would conquer the whole island with a single legion.¶ We should then have valuable information about the country and its inhabitants from the pen of Cæsar or Tacitus, historical truth would have gained and we should have light to see our way, instead of having to grope in the dark with conjecture as our deceptive guide.

\* Cæsar, *De Bello Gallico*, Lib. I., Chap. I.

† Cæsar, *De Bello Gallico*, Lib. II., Cap. 5 to 9. The ambassadors of the Remi declared to Cæsar (*De Bello Gallico*, Lib. II., Cap. 4) that the Belgæ had sprung from the Germans, but they had then been absorbed by the Celts. Perhaps they might best be described as Celts, but not Gauls.

‡ These monuments are on the Boyne in Meath, are manifestly sepulchral, and have interior chambers such as the Egyptian Pyramids.

¶ Tacitus, *Agricola*, Cap. 24. "Saepe ex eo audiivi (says Tacitus) legione una et modicis auxiliis debellari obtinerique Hiberniam posse." Apparently Agricola had a poor opinion of what resistance the Irish could offer, or a very extravagant opinion of what a Roman legion could do.





## CHAPTER III.

### *The Milesians.*

The Scythians: Their leaders—Feniursa—Gadelius—Milesius—Settled in Spain—Arrival in Ireland—Battle between Milesians and Dannaans—Milesian Kings of Ireland. Olave Fola—Con-Cormac—Nial.

WE may conjecture but cannot determine what were the boundaries of Ancient Scythia, and what was the great branch of the human family from which the Scythians sprang. Perhaps, these different tribes, scattered over such an extent of territory, belonged to a common parent stock, or, perhaps, they were nothing more than a confederation of barbaric tribes, similar in habits and occupations, but bound together, more by the bonds of common interests and common dangers, than by the memory of a common origin. If they had a common origin, it is purely a matter of speculation, whether they belong to the Mongolian or Aryan family, but it is worth noting that Gibbon\* speaks of them as Scythians, or Tartars, as if he would trace their descent to a Mongolian source. It is probable that in very ancient times these tribes were scattered over the steppes of Central Asia ; it is certain that, before the time of Herodotus, they were to be found in Europe, where their homes were spread along the Euxine, from the Danube to the Caucasus ; whilst in Asia, they had occupied the vast districts, northward from the 40th degree of latitude, and east and west from the Caspian to the Sea of Japan. These Scythians were a pastoral people. By day they attended to their flocks and herds, and when night came, they retired within the shelter of temporary encampments, where men and animals were huddled together promiscuously. Their bravery in battle was often tried and as often proved, and few enemies could withstand the impetuous charge of the Scythian cavalry ; but it must be the expression of their enemies' fears rather than the sober statement of truth, that they ate, drank, and even slept on the backs of their hardy steeds.

\* Gibbon's *Roman Empire* (4 vols.), Vol. II., pp. 140, 164-8 ; Keating, p: 96.

It is amid this people of uncertain origin and in their country of vaguely defined limits, that the ancient chroniclers of Ireland fix the home of the Milesians. They do not, however, undertake to give the exact geographical limits of Scythia. But when they pass from the geography of the country, and come to speak of its inhabitants, their imaginations cease to be inactive. History speaks of these Scythians, even after the dawn of the Christian era, as the veriest savages, but in the glowing pages of these ancient chroniclers they appear as a highly civilised people, who, in their habits and manners, in the laws which they enacted and administered, in the state of education amongst them, were a model to the nations which surrounded them. They quote with eagerness the boastful language of Justin that these Scythians conquered other nations but were never conquered themselves, and that, indeed, they had heard of but never felt the Roman arms.\* They assume with Josephus† that the Scythians were descended from Magog, the son of Japhet, and from Magog to Milesius they follow the fortunes of these Scythian leaders in laborious detail.

But even the fertile fancy of imaginative writers cannot invest with interest the personality or achievements of most of these leaders; and those who deserve even a passing notice are but few. Niul, son of Feniursa, is one. His father is said to have known *all languages*, and Niul's attainments were little if at all inferior. He settled in Egypt, married Scota, the daughter of Pharoah, and obtained a principality by the shores of the Red Sea. Here he tried to assist Moses and the persecuted Israelites. In return for this kindness to God's chosen people, his son, Gadeliu, when bitten by a serpent, was miraculously cured. But the friendship of Moses involved the enmity of Pharaoh. Niul and his followers were driven from their possessions, and had to seek for new homes in distant lands. Like Æneas, *per varios casus per tot discrimina rerum*, they wandered over many lands and many seas. From Egypt to Greece, from Greece to Crete, from Crete to Gothland, and finally from Gothland to Spain, where for generations they lived and ruled. In that country one of their chiefs, Milesius, maintained the ancient reputation of his race for military renown. Animated with a spirit of adventure, he fitted up a fleet and sailed over the Mediterranean, visited Scythia, and finally came to Egypt, where he was warmly welcomed by the reigning king. Appointed leader of the Egyptian forces he re-organised the

\* Keating, p. 97. He seems to have had access to many MSS. and Annals not known now, and he seems to have accepted everything contained in them as true.

† Whiston's *Josephus*, p. 36.

army, enforced military discipline, humbled the pride of the Ethiopians, taught the enemies of Egypt that Egypt was to be feared, and diffused a feeling of security and repose from the confines of Ethiopia to the Mediterranean. On his return to Spain, he found his countrymen much harassed by their neighbours the Goths. But he soon taught the Goths the same lesson he had taught the Ethiopians—the humiliating lesson of defeat. But the Goths continued troublesome, a famine came upon the land and the Scythians, or Milesians, as they are henceforth to be known, resolved to leave Spain, where their condition had become miserable, and to seek for some new country which they might possess in peace.

An old Druid—Caicer by name,\* had long since foretold that the Milesians would one day possess a far-off Western Isle. This prophecy they now recalled, and consulting together, they concluded that Ireland was the island mentioned in the old Druid's prophecy, and to Ireland with all their forces they resolved to go. Keating says they landed in Ireland, B.C. 1300, McGeoghegan gives the day and the year, 17th May, 1029, while O'Flaherty puts it about B.C. 1,000. The number of their ships was thirty, in each ship was thirty of the most courageous of their troops, their wives also were on board, and many others followed them, allured by the prospect of obtaining possessions in this new plantation. They first attempted to land at Wexford, but the "Dannaans alarmed at the number of their ships, immediately flocked towards the shore, and by the power of their enchantments and diabolical arts, they cast such a cloud over the whole island that the Milesians were confounded, and thought they saw nothing but the resemblance of a hog. The inhabitants by these delusions hindered the Milesians from landing their forces, so that they were obliged to sail about the island, till at last, with great difficulty, they came on shore at Inver Scene in the west of Munster."† At Sliave Mis, in Kerry, they first encountered the Dannaans and here Scota, the widow of Milesius, fell. A more decisive battle was fought at Tailtown. On that fatal field the three Dannaan Kings and their wives were killed, and the sceptre finally passed from Dannaan to Milesian hands. As Milesius was dead before his followers arrived in Ireland, the sovereignty of the island was divided between his two sons, Heber and Heremon. Two years later, these two sovereigns quarrelled; a battle was fought at Geashill, in the King's County, Heber was defeated and slain, and Heremon became sole monarch of Ireland, and the first in that long line of kings, which ended with Roderick O'Connor.

\* Keating, p. 114:

† *Ibidem*, p. 134.



It may be asked how much of all this is true—how much is fact, and how much is fiction—nor can a satisfactory reply be given. To ask the question is much easier than to answer it. Those who are engaged in mining speak of refractory ore, and complain of the difficulty they experience in extracting from it the pure gold, and similarly, in these legends of a long-past age, the difficulty is to extract what truth they contain from the mass of error which surrounds it. It is certainly true that such a people as the Scythians existed, and that mention is made of them in histories of a very ancient date. That they were savages pure and simple in the time of Herodotus, and that, even in the fifth century of the Christian era, they had not advanced beyond the manners portrayed in the court and camp of Attila—all this is equally true. The conclusion is, therefore, obvious and necessary that they could not be numbered among civilised nations two thousand years before the Christian era; and the most credulous will smile at the suggestion that their culture was equal and coeval with that of Assyria and Egypt. Their wanderings over the Mediterranean, the learning of Niul, and the military exploits of Milesius rest upon no solid foundation; and the most partial will scarcely claim that the Milesians established themselves in Ireland, long before Rome was built, or the Commonwealths of Greece arose.

When authentic history first speaks of Ireland, the country was inhabited by a Celtic people, called Scots or Milesians, Britain and Gaul, at the same time, being inhabited by a kindred race. It is not probable that they were the first inhabitants of the country, but before the introduction of Christianity they had certainly become the dominant race, the former inhabitants being either absorbed or exterminated, or, perhaps more correctly, having a distinct but subordinate position. Keating, who seems to accept without question the whole story of the Milesian wanderings, has no manner of doubt that they came from Spain to Ireland, and grows angry with Camden for suggesting that they came from Britain; he chooses to be directed by the "ancient records of the Kingdom rather than by the ill-grounded supposition of any modern whatsoever."\* Yet Camden's supposition, supported by O'Flaherty, does not appear unreasonable. It could scarcely be expected that these Milesians knew much of navigation, nor that their rude vessels could stand the full shock of the Atlantic, nor the treacherous currents of the Bay of Biscay.† It is easier and more natural to believe that they came from Gaul to Britain, and from Britain

\* Keating, p. 131:

† Unless we suppose they were Phœnicians, and even Keating does not suppose this.

to Ireland, than to suppose they came direct by sea from Spain. Buchanan\* is anxious to show that they came direct from Gaul to Ireland, but his arguments are inconclusive and carry no conviction. But whether they came directly from Spain, or whether they passed over from Gaul to Britain and thence to Ireland, cannot with certainty be ascertained. These are questions which will always remain doubtful, and in striving to arrive at the truth it must be admitted that we derive but little assistance, either from the arguments of Buchanan, or the credulity of Keating.

For obvious reasons the long list of Milesian kings coming down in unbroken succession from the tenth century before the Christian era must be taken as legendary, and deserves none of that consideration which is due to historic truth. To be able to claim that a settled form of government existed in Ireland, long before such a government was established at Greece or Rome, would be indeed flattering to the national vanity. But such a claim has not the least amount of probability on its behalf, and one of the oldest and—accepting O'Donovan's estimate of him †—the most accurate of our chroniclers, Tighernach—has the good sense to point out that events recorded previous to the time of Cimbaeth, B.C. 300, are altogether legendary. Nor indeed does posterity lose much by consigning to oblivion the vast majority of these Irish kings, for even fiction itself can say nothing of them, except that they were born and that they died. There are, however, a few, who may be excepted, and of these Olave Fola is first in order of time.

In the first list of kings given by O'Flaherty, ‡ Olave is put down as fortieth, but the author does not give the year of his accession nor the length of his reign. The name he bore—Olave, which signifies professor—testifies that he was a learned man, and he did everything that even a king could do to encourage learning. Anxious to have good laws passed, and to have besides the records of the Kingdom accurate and trustworthy, he assembled, every third year at his palace at Tara, an assembly of the princes, druids, bards and other learned men of the kingdom; public affairs were then discussed, new laws enacted, old laws, if useless or injurious, repealed. The records of the Kingdom were carefully examined and criticised, whatever was deemed inaccurate was expunged, due corrections were made, and, thus corrected, these records were handed down to posterity as authentic history. The book in which the facts of history were thus carefully transmitted was called the Psalter of Tara, and the assembly itself was called the Feis.

\* Quoted by Keating and refuted by him, pp: 126-8.

† *Four Masters*, Vol. I., p. 72.

‡ *Ogygia*, Part III., chap. 29.



In the joint reign of Cimbaeth and his wife, Macha, the palace of Emania, near Armagh, was built.\* The next sovereign—the 78th king—was called Hugony, the first of these ancient monarchs whom the chroniclers call Great.† Not content with the sovereignty of Ireland, he went over the sea to France, where his arms were ever victorious until at length he ruled over all Western Europe. He married a French princess and left twenty-five children, among whom he divided Ireland into as many parts. This division was abolished by a subsequent king, Eochy, who divided Ireland into five divisions, Ulster, Leinster, Connaught and two Munsters. Over each province there ruled a pentarch, or provincial king.‡

Tuathal, who lived in the second century of the Christian era, was the first king, it is said, who imposed the Boru tribute on the kings of Leinster. He was a warlike king, and had much fighting with the various tributary princes all of whom he vanquished. To punish them he took from each a portion of his territory, which he erected into a vast royal demesne corresponding to the present counties of Meath and Westmeath. But against the King of Leinster he was specially enraged. It appears that this prince had married a daughter of Tuathal's, and after some time, pretending that his wife was dead, he demanded and received her sister in marriage. The sisters were kept apart at the palace of the King of Leinster, but on an occasion they met and were so heart-broken at the wrong done to them that they both sickened and died.¶ In revenge for this outrage Tuathal decreed that henceforth Leinster should pay the Ardri a yearly tribute of 150 cows, 150 hogs, 150 pieces of cloth, 150 cauldrons, 150 couples of men and women in servitude and 150 maidens, with the King of Leinster's daughter among them.\*\* Whether this tribute was imposed by Tuathal or not, it is certain that such a tribute was imposed by some Ardri, and that it led to most disastrous results. Successive Ardris enforced payment, the Leinster kings, whenever strong enough, repudiated the imposition, ill-will was thus engendered, disputes arose, wars and bloodshed followed, and these rival princes in fighting among themselves prepared the way for the yoke of the stranger.

The exploits of Con of the Hundred Battles have furnished much matter to poets and bards, but when we come to the reign of Cormac Mac Art, we arrive at a period where the facts recorded

\* *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 41.

† O'Flaherty's *Ogygia*, Part III., Ch. 38.

‡ *Ogygia*, Part III., chap. 43.

¶ Keating, p. 237.

\*\* *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 54; *Four Masters*, Vol. I., p. 100, note:

may be considered facts and not mere fiction, though these facts are often embellished and exaggerated, and not always easy to recognise. Cormac who reigned in the third century, is described as the best king that Ireland ever had up to his time. He held regular meetings of the Feis at Tara, enacted many wise laws, carefully corrected the Psalter of Tara, and even wrote a book called "Princely Institutions." \* It is said that he became a Christian, and thereby much embittered the Druids.† But his fame is altogether eclipsed by that of his son-in-law, Fin MacCool, the leader of the Fenian Militia, or standing army of Ireland. The exploits of Fin and his Fenians have been illustrated by the genius of Ossian, the son of Fin, who was a poet as well as a warrior. There are probably many things ascribed to Ossian which he never wrote, and, perhaps, also in the translations of his poetry that have come down to us there are many interpolations and errors ; but that Ossian lived and wrote and that he is the great central figure in the literature of ancient Erin need not be regarded as a matter of doubt. The impudent claim of MacPherson to make him a Scotchman,‡ and to transfer the exploits of Fin and his Fenians to Caledonia, has long since been rejected. It could not survive the discovery of the forgeries which gave it birth.

Nobody would receive as historic facts the tale of Fin and his Fenians as described by Ossian and his contemporaries. Even Keating rejects many of them as fabulous, and grows angry with Boetius for suggesting that Fin himself was a giant and was fifteen cubits high.¶ Yet, strip these tales of obvious exaggeration and mere poetic adornment, leave out the gods and goddesses, the giants and the fairies, and there is no reason why they should not have a basis of historic truth. Cormac is reputed to have been a monarch of great prudence. He saw that Britain was already in Roman bondage, and he had only too much reason to fear that the Romans would cross the Irish Sea, and that the fate of Britain would soon be the fate of Ireland. In such circumstances prudence would suggest having a trained and disciplined force to guard the coasts against pirates and robbers, to watch for the coming of the invaders, to combat them in the field when they came ; and to none could the command of this force be given with more justice than to his son-in-law, Fin, who, in fighting the Romans, would be defending his family inheritance, as well as the liberty of his native land.

\* *Transactions of the Ossianic Society*, Vol. v., p. 198.

† Lady Ferguson. *The Irish before the Conquest*, p. 120.

‡ *Ossianic Society*, Vol. v., p. 179. Dr. Johnson's opinion of MacPherson is well known:

¶ pp. 281-284.

And if the Romans had come it is not unlikely that their task would be much more difficult than Agricola expected ; they would probably have encountered fierce opposition and met with valour equal to that of Caractacus.\* These Fenians were not called upon to repel foreign invasion. They became restive, insolent and rebellious, until finally after a hard fought struggle, they were overthrown at the battle of Gavra.†

In the last years of the fourth century Ireland was ruled by Nial of the Nine Hostages. Undisputed master at home, he made incursions into Caledonia and Britain, and even into Gaul. The Roman Empire was then tottering to its fall, Britain had none to rely on but native defenders, and Nial, aided by the Picts‡ of Caledonia, broke through the frail defence of the Roman wall, and made Britain his tributary province. Nor did he relinquish his conquest till the Roman legions were recalled to Britain, and then, the discipline and experience of the Roman soldier and the military genius of the ablest of the Roman generals prevailed. Perhaps, even Stilicho himself would have suffered defeat but that, in the crisis of the battle, the Attacotti, who fought in the army of Nial, deserted to the Romans and turned their weapons against the Irish king. These Attacotti were descendants of the ancient Firbolgs, who were subjugated by the Milesians and who submitted with impatience to Milesian rule. Taken into the army of the Ardri and trusted as loyal soldiers, they acted as traitors in the hour of trial.

Whoever will read the history of these islands during the first centuries of the Christian era will note that Ireland was the country of the Scots, that colonies of these Scots passed from Ireland to Caledonia where they settled, that these Caledonian Scots, with their kinsmen from Ireland, and the Picts frequently harassed the Roman province of Britain ; that it was Ireland alone which was called Scotia ; and that if sometimes Caledonia was called Scotia it was always called Scotia Minor, to distinguish it from Ireland, which was Scotia simply, or Scotia Major. Gibbon is not willing to admit all this and is ready to assert, that

\* *Student's Hume*, p. 9:

† The Ardri, Cairbre was slain in the battle, and very many of his troops, but the Fenians were almost totally destroyed. (Miss Brooke's "*Reliques of Irish Poetry*," p. 147.)

‡ THE PICTS, according to Bede (*Ecclesiastical History*, Bohn's ed., pp. 6, 7), came from Scythia to Ireland, but the Scots who dwell there would give them no settlements, and directed them to proceed to Caledonia, which they did. They then asked *wives* of the Scots, as they had none themselves. The Scots acceded to their request, but only on condition that they should chose a king from the female royal race rather than from the male, "a custom which has been observed among the Picts to this day."



probably Ireland was peopled from Caledonia "by a colony of hungry Scots." \* But the evidence of facts is against him. Claudian in describing the wars, which Stilicho waged against the Picts and Scots, always speaks of the Picts as belonging to Caledonia, and the Scots as belonging to Ireland. In the vivid language of poetry he represents Britain as giving thanks to Stilicho for having defended her, when the Scot stirred up all Ireland,† and when the sea foamed beneath his hostile oars; and writing of the wars of Theodosius, he says, that while Thule grew warm with the blood of the Picts, icy Ireland wept for the numbers of her Scots that were slain.‡ Bede as well as Camden and Buchanan state not as a matter of dispute but of certainty, that Caledonia was peopled by Scots from Ireland, and Hume, Scotchman though he is, and naturally jealous for the antiquity of his race, has written that from the second to the eleventh century, the Scots were the inhabitants of Ireland, and Ireland alone bore the name of Scotia. Before this accumulated mass of testimony even the stubborn scepticism of Gibbon must give way. In a later portion of his great work he admits grudgingly, and ungraciously it is true, that after all some slight credit may be given to the Irish traditions, and possibly in one of Nial's excursions into Britain, St. Patrick was taken away into captivity.

\* Vol. II., p. 141:

† Me quoque vicinis pereuntem gentibus, inquit

Munivit Stilicho, totam cum Scotus Iernam

Movit et infesto spumavit remige Tethys—*De Laudibus Stiliconis,*

*Liber II.*

‡ —incaluit Pictorum sanguine Thule,

Scotorum cumulos flevit glacialis Ierne.—*Honorii Augusti de 4<sup>o</sup>*

*Consulatu.*

Theodosius did not march as far as Thule, nor did he go even near it, but some allowance must be made for poetic imagination.



## CHAPTER IV.

### *Pre-Christian Civilization.*

Pagan Ireland not one Kingdom but a Confederation of small states: Political and Social Institutions—The Fine—Sept—Clan. Different classes—the King—Tanist—Druids—Different Assemblies—Cuirmtig-Dal—Aenach, etc.—Besides King and Druids—Brehons—Ollaves—Bards—Ceiles—Slaves—Tribute paid—Defects of the Clan System. The use of Letters—Mechanical Arts—Dress—Buildings—Furniture of homes—Mills—Boats.

IN pagan times Ireland must not be regarded as one Kingdom, governed by one king and one common system of laws; it was rather a confederation of small states or clans, each making its own laws, raising and spending its own taxes, governed by its own chieftain and practically independent within its own limits. There was an *Ardri*, who ruled at Tara, and who, amongst the various princes, was first in dignity, but whose authority over these princes—and he claimed some—was shadowy and nominal, and frequently his authority was flouted and his person and office despised.

The smallest organism—political and social—next to the family was the *fine*.<sup>\*</sup> It was more than a family, but it was in the family it took its rise, and was nothing more than the family overgrown beyond its original limits. Originally the family had its allotted portion of land, but as children and grand-children were born, and in their turn arrived at maturity, and became heads of families themselves, or at least at an age when they could inherit and possess property and partake of responsibilities, the original land became divided and subdivided among them. This aggregate of individuals, freemen born, members of the same clan, deriving their descent from a common ancestor, bound together by ties of kinship and interest, and possessing a common portion of land, made up the corporate body called the *fine*. At its head stood the *flaith-fine*. He was the *paterfamilias*, the

<sup>\*</sup> Ginnell; *The Brehon Laws*, pp. 104-5. O'Curry; *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*, Vol. I., p. 162-3.



representative of the *fine*, he was to sue and be sued in its name, to guard its interests and to defend its rights. Probably he had a larger portion of land than the other members of the *fine*, as this would seem to be demanded by his greater duties and obligations. Besides the *flaith*, there were sixteen other members in the *fine*, divided into four groups of four each, the property of each group and the nature of their duties and rights being measured by the nearness or remoteness of their kinship to the *flaith*. The first group called the *Gelfine*\* consisted of the *flaith* and his four sons, if he had such, or, in default of these, his nearest male relatives; the second group was the *Derbfine*; the third, the *Iarfine*, and the fourth the *Innfine*. Should a vacancy occur in one of these groups by death or otherwise, then one was advanced from a lower group to a higher and, similarly, should, for instance, a son of the *flaith* arrive at maturity and become enrolled a member of the *Gelfine*, then one of this group was lowered to the second group, one of the second to the third, until at length one of the *Innfine* was thrust out of the *fine* altogether and became simply a member of the sept, no longer burdened with the responsibilities that membership of the *fine* entailed.

As the *fine* consisted of several families, so the sept consisted of several *fin*es, the number being variable. The whole sept had its own specific portion of land, and within its limits the members were free, subject only to the clan and its requirements. The head of a sept was called a *flaith*. He was the official head and representative of the sept, as the *flaithfine* was of the *fine*, or the chieftain of the clan. In addition to his private property, which might be considerable, he had an allowance of land, tribute being also paid to him by the sept.

Higher than the sept, and usually embracing several septs, was the *clan*.† The extent of its territory was called a *tuatha* and would, perhaps, correspond to a modern barony, while the aggregate of persons who made up the clan was sometimes called a *tribe* and sometimes a *cinnell*. To the *fine* and sept it bore a resemblance and, indeed, was nothing more than a fuller development of these, for in all the connecting link was kinship, and both ruler and subject were children of one common ancestor, confederated together for the preservation of their common inheritance. The clan recognised as superior the provincial kings and paid them tribute, but the tribute was not large nor the authority

\* The Gelfine were the representatives of the rights and liabilities of the whole *fine*, formed a kind of family Council, and when property in default of direct heirs passed to the collateral heirs, the Gelfine received the inheritance, and assumed the responsibility attached to it.—*Manners and Customs*, Vol. I., p. 164.

† *Manners and Customs*, Vol. I., p. 199.

of the provincial kings often more than nominal, and to all intents and purposes, in theory and in practice, the clan was a self-governing, independent state.

The king or chief of the clan was chosen from the heads of the septs, and was elected at an assembly called the *tocomra*, which was attended by all the heads of the septs and probably also by the *flaith-fines*. Nobody could become king, unless he was of full age, nor if he was blind, lame, deaf, stupid, or had any remarkable blemish either of mind or body. In the same way, and subject to the same conditions, the *tanist*, or next heir to the chieftaincy, was elected. Should the king die, or become disqualified by reason of some blemish after his election, the *tanist* at once became king and a new *tanist* was elected. Usually the king's son became *tanist*, but this was not necessary nor did it always happen; it might be some near relative of the king whose qualifications were remarkable and recognised, it might be some *flaith* in no way related to the ruling chief, unless we include that uncertain relationship which existed between members of the same clan. The king was the official head of the clan, provided with an official residence or *dun*, and a large allowance of land as his official patrimony. He was not, however, the master of the clan, but rather its servant, his duties and rights being specific and well-defined. In peace he was first in dignity,\* and in war his was the perilous privilege of leading his clansmen to battle. He collected the taxes by his officers and he also spent them, without being asked for an account as to how they were spent. Amply provided for, he was strictly debarred from doing any servile work; such being considered beneath the dignity of a king.†

Next to the Kings the most important class were the Druids. Cæsar has described the Druids of Gaul and their beliefs, and the Druidism of Ireland and Britain was the same. Indeed it was in Mona, or Anglesea, that its doctrines and practices were taught in their highest perfection, and Cæsar suggests that it was from Britain, Druidism was introduced into Gaul.‡ The Druids taught the immortality and transmigration of souls, worshipped the sun and moon, held in special reverence the oak tree, and had their sacrifices in the open under its shade. They worshipped idols, and, before an idol called Crom Cruach, they probably offered human sacrifices,|| perhaps the prisoner taken

\* Ginnell, pp. 57-67.

† *Manners and Customs*, Vol. I., p. 235.

‡ *De Bello Gallico*, Lib. vi. cap. 13-14.

|| O'Curry, *Manners and Customs*, Vol. II., p. 222, vehemently denies this, but he instances a case where the British Druids offered human sacrifices, and if the doctrines of Irish and British Druids were the same

in battle, the criminal guilty of some grave offence, sometimes their own children were sacrificed. These Druids knew something of medicine, they studied the stars, and from their position, as well as from the croaking of ravens and the chirping of wrens, they undertook to read the secrets of the future. They decided disputes, and whoever refused to abide by their decision, they excommunicated, making him an outcast, whom to avoid was a duty and whom to touch was to be defiled. They were exempt from military service and taxation, and had enormous influence and power. In the beginning, at all events, they were Brehons and Bards as well as priests, and had a monopoly of learning. But as enactments were multiplied and judicial decisions became numerous, and required some technical training to interpret—a separate class—the Brehons—arose whose business it was, leaving religious ceremonies to the Druids, to confine themselves to the study of law.

In each clan there were two assemblies—the *cuirmtig*,\* attended by all who paid taxes, and at which laws were introduced; and the *Dal*, attended by the *flaiths*, where these same laws were examined and either rejected or passed. Of other assemblies there was the *Aenach*,† which had its origin in funeral games, was attended by several clans, and at which athletic and other competitions and fairs, in the modern sense, were held; but laws, though probably discussed, were not passed. There were the assemblies of Taeltown and Uisneach,‡ where laws were promulgated, but not often enacted, and lastly, the *Feis* of Tara,|| where laws were enacted for the nation at large. Other sources of law were local customs, which in time grew to have the force and character of law; but the source from which most of the law came was the decisions of famous Brehons, for the laws of Ancient Ireland were for the most part judge-made laws.

To know all the laws enacted, to remember the various local customs, to appreciate the worth of judicial decisions and to decide according to justice and law required much training, and we find that before one could attain to the rank of Brehon and decide with a Brehon's authority, he should have had a legal training of twenty years. There was at least one Brehon in each clan whose position was official, and who had a grant of land

why exempt the Irish. Dr. Healy holds an opposite opinion to O'Curry (*Ireland's Ancient Schools and Scholars* p. 3). See also *Tripartite Life of St. Patrick*. Introd. p. 158.

\* Ginnell, p. 57.

† *Ibid.*, p. 53; O'Curry, Vol. I., p. 255. He adds that these Aenachs were always held in cemeteries.

‡ Ginnell, p. 51.

|| O'Curry, *Manners and Customs*, Vol. II., pp. 17-19.



provided by virtue of his office. After a time the office passed from father to son, but the son, like his father, should have the necessary legal training. There were also non-official brehons,\* who lived by their fees and had no official endowment from the clan. And no doubt, besides those who sat as judges, there was a supply of professional advocates ready to plead for hire, for such a class of men have not been wanting at any period, nor in any country where there was law. It was the right of every freeman† who had suffered wrong to seek for redress, and it was his right also to select the brehon before whom the case was to be tried. He might have one, or he might have many causes of complaint. His relative might be murdered, his wife outraged, his bondman attacked, his house burned, his beehive robbed,‡ his neighbour's cattle might have trespassed on his land, his bees might have stung him,|| or sucked honey from his flowers; he might have been slandered, or a poet might have satirized him, and in Ancient Ireland, Christian as well as pagan, there was something specially fatal in poetic satire. For one and all of these offences the punishment was an *eric* or fine. But not every man had a right to complain and it has been, therefore, necessary to add that the complainant should be a freeman. A labourer or cowherd—a slave of any kind—a lunatic, the son while his father lived—none of these could be plaintiff in a lawsuit, though the master could complain of an injury done to his son or his slave and the guardian of the lunatic, if the lunatic had suffered wrong. Nor could the injured man proceed against everyone. The fool was exempt from punishment because of his want of reason, so also, for a like cause, was the madman and the idiot, and exemption was also extended to the dumb. But against every other man, from the *ceile* to the king, he had a right of complaint and to compensation if his case was proved. But he should be careful not to make random charges, and if it was discovered that he had given false evidence\*\* all redress was instantly denied him. Nor were his troubles over when the brehon had pronounced in his favour, and his opponent had been fined. There were no sheriffs or sheriffs' bailiffs, there were no police, the whole machinery for carrying out the decrees of the courts of law was wanting, and the successful litigant himself was compelled to put the legal decree in force. And in doing so he should walk warily,

\* Ginnell, p. 84.

† *Senchus Mor*, Vol. I., p. 291. He should have "honor price" are the words.

‡ *Ibidem*, Vol. I., p. 167.

|| *Ibid*, Vol. IV., p. 177, Vol. II., p. 121. There is much in the Brehon Laws about bees, which would indicate that they were much valued.

\*\* *Senchus Mor*, Vol. I., p. 57.



for if he made distress on the defendant in excess of what was allowed, he was in turn liable to be fined himself. A chief levying distress on his inferior \* could proceed without notice, but in every other case previous notice was necessary. Nor could he make a seizure, for instance, of the defendant's cattle, except accompanied by six other persons, three to enter the defendant's land, the plaintiff, a witness "who has honor price" and a distraining advocate, and four more persons to remain outside, each of these being persons "who had honor price." Then the animal might be seized and impounded, its maintenance charged and ultimately confiscated altogether if the debt was not paid and the animal itself redeemed. Instead of making a seizure in this manner, the plaintiff might *fast* on the defendant, and this was the more usual form of distress when the defendant was a person of distinction. The plaintiff fasted before the defendant's house, waiting to be paid, during which time the defendant was bound under pain of further fine to order food, and besides not to delay payment of the debt †—a strange form, indeed, of executing a decree. To modern notions these legal provisions and practices are rude and archaic, yet they are founded upon justice, and when English writers of a later age wrote of the Brehon Law that it was a "lewd custom," the severity of their censure is more apparent than its justice.

Another privileged clan were the Ollaves, who were professors of law and many were the pupils that came to learn its secrets at their feet. Some of these pupils they took into their homes and treated as members of their own family. This was literary fosterage, and was merely a sub-division of that general system of *fosterage* ‡ which so commonly prevailed in Ancient Ireland and which continued down through the centuries long after the Anglo-Norman invasion. Under this system children, especially of the upper classes, were brought up and educated in other families than their own. They were fed, clothed, and educated, and when they came of age were dismissed with a parting gift to their parents' homes. Not unfrequently there sprang up between foster-child and foster-parents the closest personal attachment, so close and so enduring, that in comparison the claims of blood and kindred were forgotten.

High among the privileged classes were the Bards. They had charge of genealogies and history and reduced the laws to

\* *Senchus Mor*, Vol. I., p. 113.

† *Senchus Mor*, Vol. I., pp. 117-119. If the defendant refused to pay after being fasted on, he was liable to *twice* the amount of the distress; if the plaintiff continued to fast after the amount of the distress was offered him, then he forfeited the debt altogether.

‡ There are many provisions in the Brehon Laws as to how foster children are to be trained.

poetic form, for when writing was little known this was the easiest way the laws could be remembered. Like the Brehons and Druids their position too was official. So also was the *Brughaid*, or public hospitaller, whose house was always to be open to the traveller. He had an endowment from the clan, to enable him to dispense hospitality and succour the traveller in distress. These were the official classes and might be called the aristocracy. Midway between them and the common people were the *aires*,\* who, though belonging to the *flaiths*, had only recently lifted themselves from the common people by the acquisition of wealth. Socially they were as the *Novus homo* of the Romans.

Below these privileged classes were the *ceiles*.† They were freemen, each a member of the *fine* and farming a portion of land for which he paid a land tax called a *ciss*, not heavy in amount, and which went for the general purposes of the clan—such as repair of roads and maintenance of the poor. He was also bound to military service when his chieftain went to war. If he was unable to stock his land his *flaith* gave him stock on a system of hire-purchase. The *ceile's* house and immediate surroundings, his cattle and crops could be disposed of by himself as private property; but his land, either in life or in death, he could only dispose of subject to the consent of his *fine*. There were *ceiles*, too, who had no property. They were born with an inheritance of land, but from want of industry, perhaps through crimes committed and fines imposed, they had become poor and were unable to stock their land and even surrendered it altogether. Lower than these were the slaves. Some, called *bothachs*,‡ were born in the clan but had no property and usually served the *flaiths* as servants and labourers, receiving wages in return or perhaps a small patch of land. The *fuadhars* || were mostly from outside runaways and criminals, outlaws, tramps, prisoners taken in war, or kidnapped as St. Patrick was, in foreign and predatory expeditions. These were considered as chattels, who did the roughest work for the lowest wages, though even these by degrees could raise themselves in the social scale by industry and ability, until, after several generations, their descendants might partake of social status and political rights.

In these turbulent times it was difficult for a clan to preserve its independence, surrounded as it was by other clans, greedy of increased territory and power, and hence arose the necessity of purchasing support from outside. In this we can trace the origin

\* Ginnell, p. 97.

† *Ibid*, pp. 111–116. O'Curry; *Manners and Customs*, Vol. I., p. 129.

‡ Ginnell, p. 149:

|| *Ibidem*, p. 155:

of tribute to provincial kings. Sprung from necessity and continued by expediency, this payment became habitual and customary, but, except in time of war when the clan should furnish and equip a force for the provincial king, the tribute was not heavy and was easily borne. The amount paid varied in different clans \* and in some cases no tribute was paid. The tribe of Burishoole, in Mayo, for example, was bound to pay the King of Connaught one hundred cows, an equal number of hogs, and one hundred mantles, but the Hy-Brian and Hy-Fiacra paid no tribute, nor were they bound to go into battle with the King of Connaught "except for stipend." † The relations between the provincial kings and the Ardri were similar to those between these same provincial kings and their sub-chiefs: and in each case, while they were entitled to tribute from their inferiors, they were also bound to give their inferiors something in return. ‡ As the sub-kings or chiefs were weak and the provincial kings strong, these tributes were regularly paid; but it might happen that the sub-king was a strong man and the provincial king a weakling, destitute of capacity or vigour, and in such cases his authority was despised and his tribute remained unpaid. And so it was also with the Ardri. Cormac and Con and Nial were respected by the provincial kings, but other Ardri were neither respected nor feared: their commands were unheeded and their menaces ignored. This was especially the case after they ceased to reside at Tara, for then even their title to be Ardri was disputed, and they no longer received the fickle allegiance that the filling of that office implied.

Much fault has been found with the clan system and to it have been attributed many of the evils which befel Ireland. But it is well to remember that such a system existed among most, if not all, primitive peoples. It existed in ancient Britain and in Gaul, as well as among the ancient Germans. The successive stages of government are usually found to be, first: tribes and

\* For instance, the *King of Connaught* was entitled to the exclusive hunting of Sliave Lughá and to the fresh ale of Murrisk (*Book of Rights*, p. 19); the King of Ulster to the games of Cooley, and the "mustering of his host at Muirthemne" (*ibid.*, p. 21), and the Kings of Cashel from the single tribe of the Muskerry should get 1,000 cows and 1,000 hogs; and from the men of Owney 100 cows "at the time of calving," and 100 pigs. (*ibid.*, p. 45.)

† *Book of Rights*, p. 109.

‡ The King of Connaught was bound to give the Chief of Siol Muire-adhaigh, a ring, a dress, and steed, a shield, sword and coat of mail; to the Chief of Umhall, 5 steeds, 5 swords and 5 ships; to the Chief of Dealbna,—6 swords, 6 shields, 6 steeds, 6 tunics and 6 drinking-horns; and to the Chief of Gregraidhe,—6 weapons, 6 tunics, 6 bondmen, 6 bondwomen and 6 coats of mail. (*Book of Rights*, p. 113.)



their chiefs; then some capable chief extends his sway over several tribes, and finally, by a process of eliminating the incapable, there arises some chief of commanding talents, who brings all the tribes under his rule, establishes a strong central government\* and enacts and has the power to enforce one uniform system of laws. In Ireland this natural process of development was arrested in its growth, first by the Danish and again by the Norman invasion, and we are left with the undeveloped product—the clan system—with all its drawbacks and imperfections. To say that it had defects is to say that it was human. With a number of petty independent states living side by side there is always danger of friction, and the danger is increased when the people are warlike and brave; and hence it need cause no surprise that ancient Ireland was filled with perpetual strife.

Nor was power equitably distributed within the clan. The king was too liberally provided for, and the tendency of the system was to gather all power and wealth into his hands. His official allowance was large, but in addition he hired out stock to the poorer land-holders and this was a fruitful source of wealth besides making these land-holders his dependents. His privilege of collecting and spending the taxes† also enabled him to grow wealthy, for though these taxes were intended to be spent for the public good—for the repair of roads and bridges and such works as also to discharge the clan's liability to their superior king—yet how often must they have been diverted to personal gain? These kings—like other men—had the vices and failings of human nature, and the opportunity to gratify rapacity and greed was not always allowed to pass. The tax-collectors were his creatures, the slaves who worked his lands were in a worse position still, and their ranks were continually added to by tramps and criminals and outcasts. These various elements combined formed a dangerous body of adherents who were ready to stand by their chief, whether he was right or wrong, and who, whilst he encroached on the rights of others, were ready to overawe those who murmured at his encroachments. In time these chiefs laid greedy hands on those lands which were used as commonage by the tribe; they made these lands their private property; they became arrogant and overbearing; and he who in theory and in law was the servant of the clan, in practice and in reality became its master. Like the ancient Germans these chiefs desired "*materia munificentiae per bella et raptus*,"‡ and thought it tame and spiritless to acquire by

\* Such a Government was established under Brian, but his death and that of his whole family, or nearly so, destroyed the hope of its continuance.

† Ginnell, pp. 122-3.

‡ Tacitus; *Germania*, Cap. 14:



labour what could be grasped by force. The Brehon Law allowed them to quarter themselves, from time to time, on their clansmen, to live—theirself and their retainers—at their expense, and by this species of extortion the profits and savings of a whole year's hard work and industry were dissipated, perhaps in a single night. Through pure caprice, or perhaps to avenge some fancied wrong, these chiefs often engaged in war and the lives of their clansmen were recklessly sacrificed in these wars, even as their property was by *bonaght* and *coshery*.\* When not engaged in war much of the chief's time was spent in playing chess within his *dun*, or chasing the deer outside its ramparts: but some also of his time was spent in feasting and drinking, surrounded by flatterers and buffoons. The *Book of Rights* makes frequent mention of "drinking cups for carousing"† to be paid as tribute, and it may be assumed that these cups were not for ornament but for use. The drink used was ale brewed from barley, the virtues (or should it be said the vices?) of whiskey were unknown.

The status of women was degrading. For the most trifling and insufficient causes divorce was granted, women were given as tribute just as cattle were, they were freely bought and sold and in the Brehon laws the price of a maiden is put down as three cows.‡ But in this they were not worse than their neighbours of Britain and Caledonia where polygamy was common and even polyandry not unknown. It is revolting to record on such respectable authority as St. Jerome that he saw an Irish tribe—the Attacotti—feasting upon human flesh in the woods of Gaul,|| but this disgusting practice must have been exceptional and rare, for nowhere else is cannibalism attributed to an Irish tribe; and it is at least possible that St. Jerome was deceived and that those whom he saw were not Irish. The discord and strife bred by the clan system were not conducive to the growth of culture or good morals, yet it would be unjust to assume that

\* Harris's *Ware*, Vol. II., pp. 74, 75. *Bonaght* was an exaction imposed by the Chief for the maintenance of his soldiers, his horsemen, his heavy-armed foot or Gallaglasses, and his light-armed foot or Kerns. *Sorohen* was somewhat similar, and *Coshery* was an exaction for provisions and lodgings for the chief's retinue and himself. All these exactions were imposed at the caprice of the chief. The corresponding English terms were Coyne and Livery.

† *Book of Rights*, pp. 73-75:

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 163-181; *Manners and Customs*, Vol. I., p. 176; Ginnell, p. 213.

|| "Ipse adoloscensculus in Gallia vidi Atticottos, gentem Brittanicam, humanis vesci carnibus" (S. Jerome quoted by O'Curry, Vol. I., p. 31.) There was certainly a tribe called the Attacotti among the Irish, perhaps there was a *British* one also, and that it was these and not the Irish S. Jerome saw:

when St. Patrick came to Ireland he found it a nation of savages. Some culture there certainly was, and some chiefs and kings were not unworthy to be remembered, but their merits were not the systems but their own. There are some constitutions so robust that they can live in a tainted atmosphere, as there are some plants so hardy that they flourish amid the winter's blasts.

Whilst O'Curry warns us that to give an account of the literature of pagan Ireland is impossible, he himself gives a list of thirty authors, who lived and wrote from the days of Ugaine More to Laeghaire, a list which may surely be regarded with scepticism.\* It is, however, certain that a species of writing called Ogham was known, and, perhaps, owes its origin to ancient Ireland: and a knowledge of Roman letters would surely be derived from Britain before St. Patrick's time. There was intercourse between the Irish and Britons, Christianity was introduced from Britain and why not equally Roman letters. Nor was music, either vocal or instrumental, uncultivated; for music has always had for the Irish a peculiar charm. In tales that go back to pagan days mention is made of the Banshee's wail and the Druid's shout, and the *Esnaid*, or chorus, was sung by Finn and his warriors as they sat around their watch-fires. The horn, or trumpet, the fiddle and the bagpipes were played, so also was the timpan; but it was from the harp the sweetest music was obtained; and as its chords were struck by a skilful hand, it moved in turn every emotion with which the human breast is filled.† In the old legend, Dagda, as he plays, compels his enraptured hearers sometimes to sleep, sometimes to laugh and sometimes to weep.

Passing to the mere mechanical arts and sciences‡ it is impossible to say to what extent mining was understood. Then as now, there was iron at Arigna, coal at Kilkenny, gold and silver and copper in the Wicklow hills, but in later times no old workings appear to have been discovered, which would show where the ancient Irish had mined, and it may be, as some suggest, that these metals were brought from foreign lands. Working in metals, at all events, was understood, and the rings and torques, the anklets, bracelets and girdles for personal adornment, and the sword and spear, the *crassach*, the *fiarlíana*, or curved blade, and the brazen shield for the sterner purposes of war attest no small share of mechanical skill. The materials of dress were woollen and linen, sometimes also the skins of

\* *Manners and Customs*, Vol. II., p. 49; *Cambrensis Eversus*, Vol. I., pp. 480-486.

† *Manners and Customs*, Vol. II., pp. 380, 306, 364-8, 266, 214-18.

‡ *Ibid.*, Vol. I., pp. 422-30-39-57-61; Vol. II., 235-54; Vol. III., 102-6. 13, 62-68. Miss Brook's *Reliques*, p. 108.

beasts. The dress of the lower orders was scanty and rude, but we do not read anywhere that they were altogether naked, or that they painted their naked bodies, as did the Britons and Caledonians.\* A *brat*,† or cloak, covered the upper portion of the body, a *berbrat*, or kilt of skins, covered the loins, whilst the feet were either naked or covered with sandals made with cowhide, the hair on the outside such as may still be seen in the Islands of Arran. The dress of the upper classes was more elaborate, and Cormac's dress, as he appeared at the Tara feis, was not unworthy of a king. "He had a red buckler with stars and animals of gold and silver, a crimson cloak, fastened by a golden brooch, a neck torque of gold, a white shirt interlined with red gold thread, a girdle of gold inlaid with precious stones, shoes of gold and two spears in his hand with golden sockets, and besides, he was symmetrical of form without blemish or reproach."‡

The ancient Irish knew little of building and few houses were built of stone,|| these being of dry masonry, for the use of mortar was unknown. Many houses were but mud cabins, but more frequently they were of wood and wicker work, round in form and consisting of only one apartment. For greater security some houses were built in lakes, the foundations being piles of wood. The approaches to these lake-dwellings, or *cranogues*, as they were called, were narrow causeways, which could be easily defended in case of attack. The *flaith's* house was called a *lis*, often surrounded by a mound of earth or dry masonry in which case it was called a *rath*, or *caiseal*. The king's house was called a *dun* and had two ramparts surrounding it, the space between these two, whenever possible, being filled with water. These frail houses are long since gone and the sounds of revelry within them are hushed, but the mounds which surrounded them may still be seen in many parts of the country—an object of curiosity to the stranger, an object of dread to the timid and superstitious—for here, they say, when the shades of night fall, the fairies hold high revel and the ghosts of the departed are seen. The rude character of the furniture,\*\* was in keeping with the houses. Vessels were made of dry and hardened clay or stone, vessels for carrying were made of leather, whilst drinking vessels were of wood, and in the better class of houses of horn and metal. Being shepherds and stock-raisers, the people made little progress

\* Cæsar; *De Bello Gallico*, Lib. v., Cap. 14:

† *Manners and Customs*, Vol. I., pp. 383-4, 397.

‡ *Ibid.*, Vol. II., p. 19. Cormac, it appears, was not always without blemish, as he was subsequently dethroned because of some physical disqualification

|| *Ibid.*, Vol. I., pp. 296 to 317.

\*\* *Manners and Customs*, Vol. I., pp. 356-60.



in agriculture, though flax and corn were sown, the corn ground by the quern and later on by water-mills. For inland transit there were roads on which carriages and other vehicles were drawn, either by horses or oxen. There were five great roads which might be regarded as national highways, all branching off from Tara, and there were, besides these many of lesser importance.\* Those on the sea-coast had their *currachs*,† or small boats, made of wicker-work and covered with hides, and in these tiny vessels they boldly traversed the deep. Larger vessels they also must have had, for they frequently pillaged the coasts of Britain, and Tacitus states that the Irish ports were well-known.‡ This indicates commercial intercourse with other countries, though the absence of a convenient medium of exchange must have hampered trade and commerce. In Cæsar's time the Britons || used small pieces of metal as money, but even this practice was not adopted in Ireland, and the exchange in kind was clumsy and cumbrous and unworthy of a people with any pretensions to civilization. Under the influence of Christianity the progress of Ireland, especially in the higher forms of culture was rapid, and in a short time the fame of its scholars and its schools resounded throughout Europe.

\* Introduction to *Book of Rights*.

† Such vessels may still be seen in the Isles of Arran:

‡ Tacitus, *Agricola*, Cap. 24. The words would seem to imply that the ports and harbours were better known than those of Britain, which would certainly seem strange, Britain being so much nearer the Continent, and so much more in touch with civilisation. Perhaps his meaning is that the *ports and harbours* of Ireland were better known than the *island* itself.

|| *De Bello Gallico*, Lib. v.





## CHAPTER V.

### *St. Patrick.*

The recognised National Apostle of Ireland—Many events in his life disputed—His birthplace—A captive in Ireland—His escape—Educated with St. Martin and St. Germanus—Whitley Stokes's objections to the current tradition—St. Patrick's second arrival in Ireland—His labours—His relations with the Druids and King Laeghaire—His travels—Death at Armagh—Civil history of the period:

IN the History of Ireland, during the fifth century, there is no event of such importance as the introduction of Christianity, and in that work the great central figure is St. Patrick. To him and to those who laboured under his direction the conversion of Ireland from paganism has been always attributed, and in his own day as in succeeding ages he has borne the title of Ireland's National Apostle. The magnitude of his work, as well as his attractive personal character, have furnished him with many biographers. Yet it would seem that a multitude of biographers do not always evolve certainty out of doubt, nor make plain what is obscure, and though much has been written of St. Patrick the doubt and obscurity still remain. It is still doubtful when and where he was born; much of his life has to be accounted for by theory and conjecture; and nobody can tell whether his age at death was 100 or 120 years. One adventurous sceptic \* has denied that such a man ever existed; others maintain that there were not one but two St. Patricks, † whilst others appear to contemplate him as something more than human, have raised

\* Ledwich; *Antiquities of Ireland*, pp: 362-70. Ledwich's theory of the Irish Church was that Christianity flourished in Ireland long before St. Patrick's time, its preachers being *Asiatic* missionaries, who preached doctrines strongly at variance with Rome, and so obstinately attached is he to this theory that though he can produce no evidence in its favour, he still clings to it, and is ready to call names to his own co-religionists—Usher and Camden.

† Cardinal Moran's *Essays on the Early Irish Church*, p: 46. There seems to be good grounds for this opinion, as there was another Patrick—called Sen-Patrick—who was converted by the Irish Apostle, became a monk at Glastonbury, and died there in great sanctity in 457:

his most ordinary actions to the dignity of miracles,\* and have without necessity and without reason multiplied these miracles beyond belief. It is this confusion and exaggeration, this excessive credulity and excessive scepticism which have furnished a pretext for the gross mis-statement of Gibbon that, in the ninth century, there were sixty-six lives of St. Patrick, and that they contained sixty-six thousand lies.†

One of St. Patrick's earliest converts was Fiac of Sletty. He was son of Erc, son of Bregan of a good family, and was a pupil of Dubthack, the chief Poet to the Ardri. Like his master, he became a Christian, was consecrated bishop by St. Patrick, appointed bishop of Sletty, and helped to spread the faith throughout the Leinster province. In a hymn which he composed in honor of St. Patrick, he gives the name of the Saint's birth-place as Nemthur, a place which has been identified as Nanterre, at the foot of Mont Valerian, about seven miles from Paris.‡

It is considered more probable that St. Patrick was born at Boulogne||; but a third view, very strongly supported and very widely accepted, is that he was born at Dumbarton,\*\* in Scotland, in 372. His father was Calpurnius a deacon, and it appears a decurio, †† his mother was Conchessa, reputed to be a relative of St. Martin of Tours. At all events, St. Patrick always held St. Martin in great reverence, and it seems not improbable that they were bound by ties of kindred. In what manner he spent his early years is not known. In his Confession he says himself that "up to his sixteenth year he did not know God," and if these words be taken literally, they would indicate that he lived as a pagan, having no respect for Christian truths. But the humility of a Saint—and St. Patrick had to the full a Saint's humility—would prompt him to magnify his faults and minimise his merits, and the words may justly be regarded to mean—that he lived, as so many youths have done, believing as a Christian, but heedless of the practices of his religion, not necessarily guilty of any grave offence against faith or morals, but rather of those sins of omission and carelessness, which so often spring from the waywardness of youth.

\* This is especially the case with Jocelin. (Life and Acts of St. Patrick.)

† Gibbon, Vol. II., p. 308.

‡ *Tripartite Life of St. Patrick*, Vol. II., pp. 403-5; a work edited with great care and learning by Whitley Stokes, and published in the Rolls Series.

|| This is the opinion of Lanigan and of Alzog.

\*\* *Tripartite*, Vol. I., p. 9 There is no question connected with St. Patrick's life and labours more hotly contested than the question of the place of his birth. The battle still rages, and with little prospect that we are nearing its close.

†† *Tripartite*, Vol. II., p. 357 : Morris's *St. Patrick* (4th edition), p. 57:

About 388, Nial the Irish king made a predatory expedition into Britain, plundered and robbed as he went along the coast, and making a descent near Dumbarton, carried away St. Patrick and a number of others as captives. The Saint was sold as a slave to a pagan chief, Milcho,\* in Antrim, and here he spent six years. The son of a Roman decurio, and therefore brought up tenderly, he must have felt all the more keenly the condition to which he was reduced. Dressed in the poorest fashion, his diet of the coarsest, his position that of a slave, his occupation herding cattle and swine, nothing was wanting to complete his misery. In this condition many would have murmured against Providence, perhaps fallen into despair, but it is in such circumstances that patience is tried and virtue gathers strength. St. Patrick took it all as punishment for the sins of his youth, and neither murmured nor repined. The snow and the sleet fell, the frost came, the biting wind swept over the hills of Dalriada, and to St. Patrick, clad in the scanty dress of a slave, it must have been trying in the extreme. Yet, he bore it all patiently, and whilst he faithfully tended his master's property, he constantly turned to God in his afflictions, and a hundred times in the day and as many times in the night he prayed.† About 395 as the result of a vision,‡ he himself says, he escaped to the coast, embarked on board a vessel lying at anchor there, and after many hardships got back to his native land.

From the time of St. Patrick's arrival in Britain until his second coming to Ireland in 432, there is an interval of nearly forty years during which, what he did and where he spent his time, is not satisfactorily explained. The current tradition is that he went to Tours to his relative St. Martin, and that here he spent the closing years of the fourth century. His journey to Tours was made in the depth of winter, at Christmas time, when the cold was intense and by the banks of the Loire, some distance from Tours, the Saint took refuge under a blackthorn tree. The local tradition is that to shield him from the cold as well as to honor him, the shrub expanded || its branches, shook off the snow with which it was covered and arrayed itself in flowers, white as the snow itself. The shrub still exists, and still

\* *Tripartite*, I., p. 19.

† *Ibidem*, II., p. 361.

‡ On a certain night he had heard a voice in his sleep saying that he should soon return to his own country, and again after a short time he heard a voice saying that his ship was ready—not near at hand but distant—"Ducenta Millia Passus," a place unknown to him and where he knew nobody.

|| Morris's *St. Patrick*—Appendix. The shrub was seen, in 1850, by Mgr. Chevaillier, President of the Archæological Society of Touraine, and by Father Morris himself, in 1881.



in the midst of winter, is covered with foliage and flowers, while all other such shrubs in the locality are leafless and bare, and so it has been from time immemorial. Such is the tradition. The village where the phenomenon occurs year after year is called St. Patrice and the flowers of the shrub are called by the natives "les fleurs de St. Patrice." After this strange adventure, St. Patrick reached the monastery of St. Martin. Originally a soldier, Martin deserted the camp for the cloister, and at Marmoutier, near Tours, established a community of monks. The fame of his sanctity went abroad, and in a short time he found himself surrounded by nearly eighty followers zealous to imitate his virtues. From the cell of a monk he was raised to the throne of a bishop, but the honors of the episcopacy he did not seek, and in his humility would have declined, and as Bishop of Tours, he still lived the mortified life of a monk.\* He still dwelt in a monk's cell, gave his means to the poor, lived on bread and water, always wore haircloth, and in the austerity of his life and the severity of his mortifications, his biographer might challenge a comparison with even St. Basil or St. Antony.†

When St. Martin died, about 400, Patrick returned to his relatives in Britain where he remained but a short time. Once more he went to Gaul and placed himself under the guidance of St. Germanus of Auxerre. This saint's career was not unlike that of St. Martin.‡ An advocate and an orator, he had practised in the Roman courts, where he acquired a reputation for eloquence. A successful man of the world and addicted to its pleasures, he suddenly changed his life, relinquished fame and riches, and for the applause of the world he substituted the solitude and obscurity of a convent cell. Like St. Martin, from being a monk he became a bishop, but it was his rank and not his life that was changed, for he still wore his shirt of hair-cloth, never drank wine and slept on the bare earth. It was here St. Patrick acquired most of his learning, here he was advanced to the priesthood, and here he spent the greater part of thirty years.¶ The state of Ireland was often before his mind; in his visions and dreams he heard the plaintive cry of its people asking him to come and walk among them; \*\* and in his waking moments he must have mourned over their pitiable condition, steeped in paganism and error. Amongst them, he felt was his call to labour, and, after consultation, he resolved to proceed to Rome.

\* Healy's *Ancient Schools and Scholars*, pp. 44-5.

† Gibbon, Vol. II., p. 505.

‡ Healy, p. 47.

¶ Morris, pp. 86-7, thinks he wandered about a good deal from one monastery to another.

\*\* Healy, p. 71.



for the necessary authority. Before leaving he stayed for some time at the monastery of Lerins, then presided over by St. Honoratus, thence he passed on to Rome. He took his way through Ivrea, and was there consecrated bishop by Amator whom Cardinal Moran thinks was no other than St. Maximus ;\* and at Rome he was commissioned by St. Celestine to proceed to Ireland. Those who are in the habit of denying his Roman mission would do well to remember the sensible words of Father Morris that "it merely meant the apostolic blessing on one who was about to go in search of martyrdom."† On his return from Rome, St. Patrick passed, accompanied by some priests and bishops, through Gaul and Britain, and finally arrived in Ireland in 432.

To the traditional account of St. Patrick's life grave objections are raised. They are put with clearness by Whitley Stokes, and by him are considered fatal to its acceptance.‡ It is said that if St. Patrick was absent from Ireland nearly forty years, he would have forgotten to speak the Irish language in 432, and he appears to have been able to speak it: that if he lived so long in the school of St. Germanus he would be able to write better Latin than he wrote in his Confession; that one so zealous to convert the Irish would never wait for forty years to begin: and most fatal objection of all—that if he was absent from Ireland so long he could not write, as he has done, that he lived among the Irish from his youth. Regarding these objections as fatal to the current tradition, Whitley Stokes has his own theory which is that St. Patrick, after escaping from captivity, went to Gaul, acquired sufficient learning to get ordained there; then, as a priest, he came to Ireland, where he remained several years, but meeting with poor success went back to Gaul, and thence to Rome, where he was consecrated bishop, and then returned to Ireland.

This theory is plausible but not necessarily true, for what is plausible is not always true. Nor should the current tradition be lightly set aside for what after all is but a theory. If St. Patrick never met any Irish in Gaul and never spoke Irish for nearly forty years, probably he would have forgotten it altogether. But there was intercourse between Ireland and Gaul, there were Christians in Ireland, and might not some of these have met St. Patrick in Gaul, perhaps occupied cells at Marmoutier or Auxerre? St. Patrick evidently looked forward for years to preaching the Gospel in Ireland, he firmly believed he was divinely called to do so, and to speak the Irish language

\* Morris, p. 113.

† *Ibid.*, p. 115.

‡ *Tripartite*, Vol. I, Introduction, p. 138.

he knew would be a necessary preparation for the work, and whatever opportunities were thrown in his way to speak it he would certainly seize. To write a language with facility requires practice, and perhaps St. Patrick had but little practice in writing Latin at Auxerre. In Ireland he had much less, for his time was occupied in preaching to the people, founding churches and schools, passing from one district to another, but everywhere speaking the language of the people amongst whom he lived. It was at the close of his life that he wrote his Confession. He had then spent nearly sixty years in Ireland, his tongue and pen had become habituated only to the Irish language, and by that time he would have lost the art—if he ever had it—of writing Latin with facility. His zeal to convert the Irish was undoubted, but zeal to be effective must be tempered by prudence. He should first acquire knowledge, which to one so ignorant as he was when he escaped from Ireland, must have taken many years. When he had acquired the knowledge, he should consult his superiors, he should await their decision and act on their advice, and this might take many years more. And there are indications that from men he got contradictions and disappointments in abundance, and that nothing but the conviction that his call was from heaven could have sustained him through all these years.\* If we are compelled to take the words “from my youth” (*a juventute mea*) † in the strictly literal sense they would mean that St. Patrick came to Ireland at latest in 412, that is before he had passed his fortieth year. But it may be that the words are to be taken differently. When St. Patrick wrote he was an old man, and had already laboured for over fifty years in Ireland. And as he remembered the dangers he passed through, the hardships he underwent, the miseries he had borne through that long space of time, he must have thought that at the commencement the vigour and activity of youth were his, and that in everything—even in years—he was young. Perhaps, it may be that he contemplates, not the number of his years, but rather the vigour and activity of his body and mind. However, the words be explained, the year 432 has been taken as the year of his arrival in Ireland.

He found many things changed since his escape from captivity. Nial of the Nine Hostages was dead: he was assassinated in 405 in Gaul.‡ He left a numerous family among whom his dominions were divided, the Ulster portion going to his sons, Owen and Connell, from whose names their territories came to be called Tirowen and Tirconnell. Nial’s nephew, Dathi, was his

\* Morris, p. 103.

† Smith’s *Latin Dictionary*.

‡ *Four Masters*; Keating, p. 326.

successor as Ardri, and he too made incursions into Britain and Gaul. Tradition has it that while leading his army at the foot of the Alps he was, in the year 428, killed by lightning. Then Laeghaire, son of Nial, became Ardri. There were Christians in Ireland in these days, and in 430 Palladius, a bishop\* and native of Britain was sent by Pope Celestine "to the Scots who believed in Christ." To what extent Christianity existed is uncertain, but the number of Christians must have been few. Palladius met with many obstacles, and this, coupled, perhaps, with the feebleness of declining health, must have disheartened him. He left Ireland and returned to Britain, where he soon died, leaving to St. Patrick both the labour and the glory of converting the Irish.

St. Patrick landed in Ireland, probably at, or near, Bray, in the County of Wicklow. In the spirit of a Saint returning good for evil, his first care was for his old master, Milcho, who still lived, and with the object of converting him he proceeded northwards. But the stern old pagan would have none of his Christianity: a pagan he was born and a pagan he would die. Rather than meet St. Patrick and submit to the indignity of being instructed by his former slave, he set his house on fire and taking his treasures jumped into the flames, where he perished.† With Dichu, another Ulster chief, Patrick was more successful. He and his household were baptised and he also gave Patrick a site for his first church at Saul, near Downpatrick, where long afterwards the Apostle died. Passing southwards, St. Patrick met near Dundalk a youth named Benin, or Benignus, who became his most attached follower as well as coadjutor in the Archdiocese of Armagh. It was at Slane and in sight of Tara itself that St. Patrick determined to celebrate the Paschal feast, and here he lighted the Paschal fire. It was a most dangerous thing to do. The Ardri and his court were then at Tara, and were celebrating some great festival, perhaps some of the great pagan festivals, perhaps the birthday of the king himself.‡ During the continuance of the festival it was unlawful to light any other fire except the fire of Tara, and whoever did, committed a crime for which death alone could atone. His Druids informed the Ardri of the fire lighted at Slane, and one of them prophetically announced that if that fire is not put out to-night it will never be put out in Erin.¶ If the fire represent the fire of Christianity the prophecy has been fulfilled. Sometimes, it is true, the fire has burnt low, the heat it gave out was little,

\* Healy, p. 49.

† *Tripartite*, Vol. I., p. 39.

‡ Introduction to *Book of Rights*.

¶ *Tripartite*, Vol. I., p. 43.



and its light was dim, but it still burned, and never once through the changing centuries, has it been completely extinguished.

Laeghaire was not of the material of which converts to Christianity are easily made. Brought up in paganism he clung with tenacity to pagan errors. Much influenced by the Druids he wished for no other priesthood, regarded with ill favour this new religion, which preached self-denial even to kings, and looked with disdain upon its accredited apostle, so humble and so poor. But the greatest difficulty was with the Druids. They were fighting for their great privileges and had an instinctive dread that if Christianity got any foothold, their own power was gone for ever. The artifices of the dishonest, the tricks of the unscrupulous, the weapons of despair and even of murder they did not hesitate to use, and more than once the life of St. Patrick was attempted. The contest between them and the Apostle reminds us of that between Aaron and the Egyptian magicians, and the result in both cases was the same, for the victory was with Patrick as with Aaron. His biographers tell with delight how the Druid, invoking the ordeal of fire, was burned to ashes, while Benignus, the Christian champion, remained untouched ; \* how the Druids brought snow as well as darkness on the plain, but were unable to remove either until St. Patrick intervened ; and how, when the Ardri, enraged at the death of his Druid, attempted the Apostle's life, twelve thousand of the king's followers were miraculously slain. It is easy to be sceptical about these statements, and to scoff at them as so many childish fictions, the utterances of partiality and credulity ; but the fact stands out that Christianity conquered, that Laeghaire himself embraced the new faith though he did not persevere in it, that Dubhtach, the Chief Poet, was converted, and that thousands followed his example, and that, at Tara, Druidism received a shock which was but the precursor of its final ruin.

After remaining at Tara some time and baptising many, St. Patrick proceeded northwards, overthrew the idol of Crom Cruach in Leitrim, and erected a Christian Church where it had stood. From Leitrim he passed over the Shannon and traversed Connaught, and remained and laboured in that province for seven years. By the Druids alone was he opposed, by all others he was well received, and among every class his converts were many. Among these converts were the two daughters of the Ardri—Ethne the Fair, and Fedilm the Ruddy. They

\* *Tripartite*, Vol. I., p. 57-9. Both were put into the same house and the house set on fire ; the Druid was placed in a wet portion with a Christian vestment on him ; yet, the Druid was burned though the vestment was unharmed.



were being fostered at the palace of Cruachan, and one day coming to a well in the neighbourhood to wash their hands, they found St. Patrick accompanied by some of his disciples. In the conversation that ensued St. Patrick explained to them his religion, telling them that his God was the God of all things, of the heavens and the earth, of the sea and river, of the sun and moon and stars, of the high mountains and lowly valleys, and he explained the mystery of the Trinity, and taking up the Shamrock he pointed out that as the three leaves grew from one stem, so did the three Divine persons partake of the same Divine Nature.\* The two princesses were converted, and as they expressed a wish to see Christ face to face their wish was granted; they died after being baptised, and "Patrick put them under one mantle in one bed, and their friends bewailed them greatly." At intervals during these years in Connaught, St. Patrick often had recourse to long periods of mortification and prayer. The place he selected for his retirement was the very summit of Croagh Patrick, a mountain situated almost on the edge of the sea, some few miles from Westport in Mayo. Looking seaward he had before him Clew Bay with its myriad islands, the roaring of the waves was in his ears, the winds howled and raged around his head, the rain fell as it can fall only on the western coast, and the fitful flashes of lightning lighted up the desolation and gloom. And high up above the heads and the homes of men, like Moses on Mount Sinai, he held solitary communion with God. He prayed much and long,† for the conversion of those still in darkness, for the perseverance of the converted, for the prosperity of the infant Church.

From Connaught the Saint passed to Ulster, where his movements are traced through Donegal, Tirowen, Dalriadia in North Antrim, Dal Araidhe in South Down, and Monaghan. In Tirowen he was hospitably entertained by the ruling prince Owen, at his palace at Ailech, and at Monaghan he appointed Macarten, Bishop of Clogher.‡ Afterwards he is to be found in Meath, where he visited Tara, and about the same time consecrated Fiac, Bishop of Leinster,|| with his episcopal residence at Sletty. When he had traversed the other provinces, he entered Munster for the first time, and there, as in Connaught, he remained for seven years. Ængus, the King of Cashel, received him well, and himself and his people were baptised; similar

\* *Tripartite*, Vol. I., pp. 101-103: There is a tradition that on many occasions St. Patrick so used the Shamrock in his preaching.

† *Tripartite*, Vol. I., pp. 115-121.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 190.

success awaited him among the Deisi ; and when he left Munster the greater part of the province had embraced Christianity. Returning from Munster he passed through Leinster, on his way to Armagh, his life being twice attempted on the way. Once his charioteer was mistaken for him and was murdered ; and further north, a pagan chief, Maccuill, attempted unsuccessfully the life of " this shaveling who deceives everyone."\*

At Armagh, St. Patrick obtained land from a chieftain called Dare, and on this land he built a church and made Armagh the principal See of Ireland, a dignity which it still retains.

He could look back on a life of ceaseless activity in which great results were achieved. He had traversed every district of Ireland ; all classes had listened to his preaching, and from all classes converts had been made. He had met in argument and confounded his greatest enemies, the Druids. Brehons and poets, princes and kings, had not only become his disciples, but in many cases his bishops and priests. A number of high-placed virgins, following the example of St. Bridget, had renounced the world and its pleasures, and retired into the solitude of the cloister ; many of them incurred the anger of their parents in doing so. He had, according to Nennius,† built 365 churches, consecrated an equal number of bishops, and ordained 3,000 priests. He had held synods and passed decrees for the government and regulation of the Church, amongst others that well known decree that whatever disputes could not be settled in Ireland were to be referred to Rome.‡ Whilst he yet lived, schools were established, convents and monasteries were being rapidly multiplied, the whole machinery of a prosperous church was in active operation, and a century after his landing in Ireland, no less than 350 Irish lived, whose names were enrolled among the saints.

Those who regard the Church as a mere human institution, and reject everything but human effort in the propagation of its doctrines, will ask with surprise and incredulity how all this could be accomplished by a single man. In the selection of persons to assist him, and in making use of what opportunities were thrown in his way, St. Patrick showed great wisdom. Knowing that the common people are like a flock of sheep, who

\* *Tripartite*, Vol. I., p. 221. This same Maccuill soon after became a Christian and preached the faith in the Isle of Man.

† *Tripartite*, Vol. II., p. 500.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 356. The words are " quaecumque causa valde difficilis exorta fuerit atque ignota cunctis Scotorum iudicibus ad cathedram aBpi Hiberniensium *i.e.*, Patricii referenda, si vero in illa. Sanari non poterit talis causa praedictae negotiationis ad sedem apostolicam decrevimus esse mittendum, *i.e.*, ad Petri Apostoli cathedram auctoritatem Romæ urbis habentem."

will follow their leader, he addressed himself first to the kings and princes, and when their conversion was effected, the task with the people was less difficult. The Brehons and Bards, the poets and historians, whose position and learning claimed the respect of the people, he appointed to offices in the church: the Druids, if they became Christians, were treated similarly: but with Druidism itself he would have no parley and no compromise, feeling that between it and Christianity there existed an irreconcilable antagonism. He wished to disturb existing institutions as little as possible. The power of the princes, the privileges of the Bards, the office and duties of the Brehons, the peculiar constitution of the sept and clan were the same in Christian as in pagan times. Crom Cruach and his idols were replaced by the Christian Church with its cross: the priests and bishops succeeded the Druids, for the feast of Beltaine was substituted the festival of St. John, and for Samhan that of St. Martin. If the laws were revised under his supervision, as it appears they were,\* it was not to abolish them altogether: it was rather to reduce them to order, to purge them of paganism, to bring them into harmony with the wants of Christianity.

Thus was the transition from paganism to the Gospel made easy. The piety of the Saint, his humility and poverty, his sympathy with the distressed, his charity to the poor, his manifest sincerity, his self-sacrifice, must have attracted many towards him. Yet even all this will not explain how one so poor, without great learning or exalted birth, was able to overcome the fierce opposition of the Druids, to bring a whole nation to the faith, and to level to the dust the most venerated idols of paganism. It may be remembered that when St. Paul preached, it was not in the lofty strains of human eloquence, that it was Gallilean fishermen, and not philosophers, who were selected to preach the Gospel through all lands, and when these things are remembered, St. Patrick will be more easily recognised as but a capable and willing instrument in the hands of the Divine Founder of his faith. The closing years of his life were spent at Saul, near Downpatrick, and during these years of retirement he wrote his Confession, and perhaps also his Epistle to Caroticus.† The Confession is an explanation of his own conduct and motives; the Epistle is addressed partly in entreaty, partly in anger, to a

\* This was done by a Committee of nine persons—three kings, Laeghaire Corc and Daire: three "Saints," Patrick, Benen (Benignus) and Carineach, and three antiquaries, Ross, Dubthach and Fearghus. (*Four Masters*, at the year 438.)

† He wrote two letters to Caroticus, but it is only the second of these which has survived.



British prince who had pillaged the Irish coast, and brought away some of the Christian Irish into captivity. Petrie gives the date of St. Patrick's death as 493.

The civil history of the period contains little worth recording. Like his predecessors, Nial and Dathi, Laeghaire continued to harass the Britons, and the sufferings of that afflicted people must have been great. In a petition for help to the Roman Consul (446), which was appropriately styled the "Groans of the Britains," they complain that they are entirely at the mercy of the Picts and Scots ; and that while these savages drive them into the sea, the sea flings them back upon the land ; so that theirs was the pitiable alternative, either to perish in the waves, or be murdered upon land. But no help came from Rome. The resources of the Empire were strained to the utmost in the struggle with Attila, and while Italy and even Rome was menaced, Britain was forgotten. In this extremity the Britons appealed to the pirates of the German Ocean ; and these came as mercenaries, but were soon strong enough to remain as masters. Henceforth the Irish king found it more prudent to cease his foreign depredations : yet at home he was not at peace, and in exacting the Boru tribute his relations with Leinster were those of perpetual and bitter conflict. Before his death (458) he relapsed into paganism, thinking that if he died a Christian he would insult the memory of his pagan ancestors. He was buried at Tara, standing erect, clothed in full armour,\* his face turned towards the Leinstermen, so that in death, as in life, he would seem to menace his ancient foe. Of the two succeeding Ardris, Oliol Molt, who died, in 479, and Lughaid, who reigned at the opening of the sixth century, we know nothing except that they were kings.

\* This must have been nothing more than the usual dress he wore in battle. Chain armour was unknown in Ireland and was not worn even at the battle of Clontarf.





## CHAPTER VI.

### *Progress of Religion and Learning.*

St. Patrick and the training of the clergy—First Christian Schools—The clergy and the Clans—The beginning of Monasticism—St. Enda, St. Finian of Clonard, St. Brendan—Nuns—St. Bridget—Life and labours of St. Columba—Leaves Ireland for Iona—Converts the Picts—Attended Convention of Drumcat—Dies at Iona—Bardic schools—The Tain Bo Cualgne—Monastic Schools—Clonmacnoise—Columban schools—Adamnan—School of Bangor—Lismore—St. Kevin of Glendalough—Irish Missionaries abroad—In Caledonia—Among the Anglo-Saxons in Continental lands—Orthodoxy of the Irish Church—Pelagianism—The Paschal dispute.

OF the many difficulties that surrounded the labours of St. Patrick, after his arrival in Ireland, one of the greatest was the want of a native ministry. Bishops and priests accompanied him on his coming to Ireland, in 432, but they were from Britain and Gaul, and must have been totally, or at least partially, ignorant of the Irish tongue.\* Bishops and priests were wanted, who could preach to the unconverted in their own language and at the same time supply the needs of the converted. The want was soon partially supplied. Wherever St. Patrick found suitable candidates with the necessary amount of virtue and zeal, he made them part of his special following, had them taught as he went from place to place, and as soon as they were able to read the Scriptures, had even an elementary knowledge of the truths of Christianity, and were able to explain these truths to the people, no matter how rudely, he had them ordained priests.† To be able to read and write was necessary for the clergy, though little else was exacted. Nor were their outfit and personal belongings more imposing than their intellectual equipment. A priest had his catechism, his missal, his ritual for administering the sacraments, his copy of the Scriptures for preaching to the people; whilst a bishop had, in addition, a bell,

\* Montalambert—*Monks of the West*—Book VIII., Chap. 3.

† Healy, pp. 58-63.

a chalice, a crozier, and a leathern satchell in which his few books were contained.\* Thus scantily dowered and rich only in faith and zeal, these soldiers of the Cross went forth to wage war against the hosts of paganism.

But this primitive simplicity soon passed away. About 450, a college was founded at Armagh, of which St. Benignus was given charge, and the great object of which was to train subjects for the priesthood. In that college were taught theology and the Scriptures, a knowledge of Latin, and perhaps Greek was acquired, and to supply the various churches with books, there was a special house in which students were employed as Scribes. In the opening years of the sixth century, the rector of the school of Armagh was Gildas, the historian of the Britons.† Under the auspices of St. Bridget and St. Conleth, a school was founded at Kildare: a school was founded at Noendrum by St. Mochua; whilst Mochta founded the school of Louth. These schools had soon an abundance of students, and the Church a supply of educated bishops and priests.

In each clan there was at least one bishop, perhaps more, for dioceses were not yet established and a bishop's power was not restricted within certain territorial limits, to the exclusion of all other bishops.‡ A grant of land was soon given the bishop by the clan, and here he built his church and his school, if he had one, and with the priests who assisted him, and the necessary retainers, who cultivated the land, here he lived. Of this little society, modelled on the clan, the bishop was the chief, but he sought for no personal indulgence and possessed no private wealth, for what property there was, was the common property of all, and if he desired any ascendancy over those with whom he lived, it was only what might come from harder labour and greater austerities. These bishops and priests of necessity mixed much with the laity by whom they were surrounded, for they had to preach to them, to administer the sacraments, to adjust their differences, if that were possible, to sit in their assemblies and their banquet-halls.

There were many ardent natures to whom this condition of things was distasteful; and from the very first the spirit of monasticism existed in the Irish Church. St. Patrick was educated under St. Martin and St. Germanus, two famous monks; his co-workers in Ireland most likely grew up under monastic influence, and, in the churches they established, the bishop and his clergy in their mode of living, in their relations with each other, were not unlike the abbot and his monks. But to mingle

\* Healy, p. 64.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 117-120.

‡ *Monks of the West*, Book VIII., Chap. 3.

in society and indulge in social intercourse is repugnant to the monastic state, for the very name monk suggests a solitary, who lives apart and alone, communing only with his God. Many wishing to be perfect embraced this state with all that it implied. Leaving everything—friends, family and wealth—they retired to some unfrequented spot. The waters of the neighbouring river (they generally settled near a river), quenched their thirst; the herbs that grew on its banks satisfied the pangs of hunger. They fasted, they prayed, they wept for their own sins and the sins of others. Their only shelter was a few wattles covered with sods, and when night came they stretched their ill-clad bodies on the bare floor, and not unfrequently they slept in the open air. In a colder climate and amid harsher surroundings, there was soon repeated the wonders of the Egyptian desert. These solitaries soon became objects of veneration and awe, and the traveller, as he passed their little huts, crossed himself devoutly, muttered a prayer and asked the holy man's blessing on his journey. But the monk's retreat was soon invaded and no longer was he allowed the privilege of being alone. Others came, eager, like himself, for perfection. They came to share his poverty and mortifications, to copy his example, to be guided by his advice, to sit at his feet and learn wisdom. Each new-comer built his own hut; a church was constructed, a grant of land obtained, their master soon became their abbot, and usually their bishop, and they became his monks. It was thus, from such modest beginnings, that some of the most splendid monastic establishments took their rise.

Of these Abbots, one of the most notable of the sixth century, was St. Enda of Arran. Born about 450, and son of the king of Oriel, at his father's death he became king, but through the persuasion of his sister—St. Fanchea\*—who was a nun, he resigned the crown, and became a monk. With that craving for solitude, which was so characteristic of the period, he asked, and obtained from his relative, the king of Munster, a grant of the Isles of Arran, in Galway Bay, and here he arrived in 484. For the purpose he had in view, for solitude, penance and mortification, the place was not ill-chosen. The salt sea, the limestone rock, the sea-birds perched upon the cliffs, the sea-weed and the fish—these are plentiful in Arran: but there is nothing else in abundance; the herbage is scant, the soil is light, the crops often fail; and from the midst of the melancholy ocean there comes year after year the pitiful cry of hunger. The narrow limits of these islands were too small for Enda's fame; it travelled across the sea to the mainland, and soon men came from all

\* She was Abbess or Superioress of a convent near Enniskillen. (Healy, p. 165.)



parts of Ireland to partake of his mortifications and sanctity. His disciples in a short time numbered one hundred and fifty ; what they were at his death in 540, no one can tell : and of those who died the death of saints in Arran, and lie buried in its consecrated soil the number is known only to God.\* Their lives were of great self-denial. During the day they fished in the sea, or cultivated little patches of land among the rocks : others ground the meal and baked the bread ; and when night came they retired to their little stone cells—beehive shaped—and never warmed by a fire. Wine they never tasted, meat hardly ever, and in prayer and mortification and the practice of the most rigid austerities their whole lives were spent.

Not less remarkable than St. Enda was St. Finian of Clonard. The son of a Leinster Chief, and born in 470, he received most of his education in Wales, where he had as his school-fellows, or perhaps as his teachers, St. David, St. Gildus and St. Cadoc. Returning to Ireland, in 510, he founded more than one monastery in Wexford and Wicklow, but in these places he lived with others, and his desire was to be alone. Leaving his monks, he retired to Clonard in Meath. His drink was the waters of the Boyne on whose banks his retreat was situated, his food was herbs and fish, his companions, the wild beasts, his occupation, the study of the Scriptures and prayer. His humility, his sanctity, his learning, his eloquence in expounding the Scriptures, charmed and attracted many who came to visit him. His lonely retreat was soon invaded by those who wished to share his privations and to benefit by his teaching, other cells were built and inhabited, and but a short time elapsed until three thousand disciples looked to St. Finian as their master. Clonard became the most famous monastery in Ireland, and Finian the most famous teacher. Even Abbots who heard him were satisfied that from him they had much to learn. He has been called the the tutor of the Irish Saints, and if the monks of the sixth century became Saints at Arran, they became scholars at Clonard. Columba of Iona, Canice of Kilkenny, Rhodanus of Lorrha, Brendan of Birr, Kevin of Glendalough, all these were at one time or other at Arran or Clonard. Nor should Kieran be omitted, who, in 540, founded the monastery and school at Clonmacnoise, a school which soon far exceeded in influence and importance even Clonard itself.

Much has been written of another of these pupils—Brendan of Clonfert—and many poetic legends have clustered round his name. He has been called Brendan, the Navigator. He was adventurous and daring, loved travel and change, and desired of all things to traverse the sea and discover unknown lands.

\* It was called "Arran of the Saints." (Moran's *Essays*, p. 132); *vid.* also Lanigan, Chap. 10.



By land he visited many of the great monasteries of Ireland, and from his native home in Kerry, he launched his little currach on the deep. He visited the islands round the coast, crossed the Shannon, went as far as Wales, and penetrated even to Iona, to see his old friend Columba. Poetic legend speaks of his wanderings over the Atlantic, where far to the West, he found a delightful isle, where the breezes were laden with celestial odours, where flowers of every hue grew in abundance, where neither rain nor hail nor frost was known, and where he was accosted by an angel of the Lord who commanded him to return to his native land. Whatever opinions there may be about this island, or about the luxuriance and splendour of its vegetation, there can be no doubt about the luxuriant imagination of the poet.\* In 560, Brendan founded a school and monastery at Clonfert, which afterwards acquired fame, and, in 577, his wanderings on this earth ceased. In that year in the monastery of Annaghdown, in Galway, a monastery built on the edge of Lough Corrib, St. Brendan sank to rest.

But it was not only monks and their monasteries that flourished during that period. St. Patrick could boast in his Confession that many daughters of the Irish had renounced the pleasures of the world and lived as virgins, many in the face of strong and persistent opposition. Some of them lived with their friends, and in striking contrast to the dissipations and crimes around them they prayed and fasted, chastised their bodies and were anxious only for their souls. Others, like the sister of Benignus, were privileged and regarded it as such to wait upon St. Patrick and his companions. For the ever-increasing number of these virgins, retreats were required, where they could live in community subject to a common head and bound by a common rule. Of those who founded such retreats, the most remarkable was St. Bridget. Her father was Dubhthack, a Leinster chief, her mother was a slave in that chief's home, and Dubhthack's wife, jealous and angry that a slave should alienate from herself her husband's affection, insisted that the slave should be sold, and threatened that if such were not done she would leave her husband and insist upon taking her dowry with her. Bridget's mother was sold to a Druid, and it was in his house at Faughart, near Dundalk, that Bridget was born, about 450. But when her mother was sold to the Druid it was stipulated that her offspring should be free, so that while Bridget was born in slavery, and the daughter of a slave, she was not a slave herself, and was allowed to return to her father's house where she was baptised.† Her beauty was remarkable, and her worldly prospects bright, but society

\* Healy, p. 215-16:

† Douglas Hyde—*Literary History of Ireland*, pp. 156-157:

had no attractions for her, she loved to fly from its allurements, would give all her father's property to the poor if allowed,\* and long before her twentieth year she vowed to live and die a virgin. If all that appears in Lanigan's pages† be true, she founded several convents before settling in Kildare, and travelled much through Munster and Connaught. Finally, about 487, under the shadow of a great oak tree, she founded a convent in her father's territory at Kildare. Her charity, her humility, her hospitality to strangers brought visitors from all parts, and in a short time no church in Ireland was better known than Kildare, or the Church of the Oak. Besides her convent of nuns, she erected a monastery which soon became filled with monks, and a bishop—St. Conleth was the first—was appointed its head. He was appointed at the request of St. Bridget, but he received no jurisdiction from her, but from the Church; and the story that St. Bridget herself had spiritual jurisdiction over the monastery and its abbot, and that she received Holy Orders from Bishop Mel,‡ or from any other bishop, does not deserve to be treated seriously. She died in 523, more regretted than any saint since St. Patrick. Then, as now, the whole Irish race held her in the highest honor, and among Irishwomen she has always held the first place in their veneration and love. From Kildare she founded many convents. Her example was widely followed. St. Ita, St. Fanchea and others also founded convents, and before the sixth century closed, there were few districts in Ireland that had not their community of nuns.

As St. Bridget in her day was the first of Irishwomen, so the first of Irishmen was St. Columba. Born at Garten, in Donegal, in 521, in him were commingled the blood of the Irish and Scottish Kings, and Dr. Reeves thinks || with some reason that to his high descent as much as to his abilities and sanctity was owing the enormous influence he enjoyed among his countrymen. He was educated, partly under Finian of Moville, partly at Clonard, partly at Arran and partly at a monastery near Glasnevin. He embraced the clerical state, and in due course

\* So displeased was her father at her extravagance in this respect, that he attempted to sell her as a slave to the King of North Leinster.

† Chapter 10.

‡ Olden: *The Church of Ireland*, p. 41. She received the religious veil from Bishop Macaille (Healy, p. 129), but this is entirely different from receiving the Sacrament of Orders, which a woman is incapable of receiving.

|| P. 8, note: "A member of the reigning family in Ireland, and closely allied to that of Dalriada in Scotland, he was eligible to the sovereignty of his own country." His half-uncle was on the throne at his birth and he lived during the successive reigns of his cousins Domnhall, Fergus, and Earby."

was ordained priest. His ambition was to be a monk, though he did not desire to live as a solitary but rather in community with other monks. In 545, he founded the monastery and church at Derry, eight years later that of Durrow in the Queen's County, and between this later date and 561 he must have founded many other monastic establishments in all of which he exercised authority, for Reeves gives the names of no less than thirty-seven churches in Ireland, which were either founded by him, or in which his memory was specially venerated. He was largely, if not entirely, responsible for the battle of Cuildevne (561), and for the bloodshed which it entailed—a strange thing for an abbot, who should set his monks an example of humility and forbearance, for a priest, whose mission was one of peace, and who might reasonably be expected to allay rather than arouse the fierce passions of revenge and war. But if his nature was passionate it was also generous; he deplored the harm he had done and accepted as just the hard penance imposed by St. Molaise,\* whom he consulted, that he should leave Ireland and live and die in a foreign land.

His biographer, Adamnan,† slurs over the battle of Cuildevne as if Columba was in no way concerned. He states that his going to Iona was purely voluntary, though he makes mention of a synod in 562, when an attempt was made to have Columba excommunicated, presumably for his connection with the battle. Lanigan's denials are much more dogmatic and sweeping. He regards the whole story about Finian's book—the cause of the battle—as “unbecoming even the gravity of common history,” and grows angry at the suggestion that Columba was in any way the cause of the battle; that he had therefore nothing to do penance for, and was not sent, but went voluntarily to Iona.‡ But the vehemence of Lanigan's language is more apparent than the soundness of his arguments, violent assertion cannot displace constant and venerated tradition nor weaken weighty authority; and if Columba did urge his kinsmen to battle, it only shows that he had the fierce passions and the quick resentments of his race, that as a consequence he did grievous wrong for which, amid the solitude and desolation of Iona, he afterwards made noble atonement.

\* Healy, p. 311: St. Molaise was St. Columba's confessor; he was of Innismurray Island, but at the time of the battle was at Ahamlish, only two miles from Cuildevne.

† Reeves' *Adamnan*, p. 193: It seems he would have been excommunicated but for the intervention of St. Brendan of Birr though Adamnan says he would be condemned for insufficient cause (“pro quibusdam veniabilibus et tam excusabilibus causis.”)

‡ Chapter II. *Monks of the West*, Book IX., Chap. I. Montalambert thinks it likely that Columba's excitable temper had led him into other crimes besides his share in this battle.



It was in 563 that Columba left Ireland and landed at Iona, which he received, it is said, as a gift, from Connal, King of the Dalriadian colony of Caledonia. Situated but a mile from the great island of Mull, three miles in length, and between one and two in breadth, bleak, barren, desolate and lone, bounteous of rock, sparing of fertility, reluctant to yield but the scantiest of crops, its sides worn by the waves, its surface swept by the storms—such was Iona in Columba's time, and such is Iona still. Dr. Healy who visited the place in recent years has noted that in the whole island there is not a single tree,\* but in Columba's time there were some osiers and these served for the monks to build their church and their cells. Later on they built houses of wood,† but the timber had to be brought from the neighbouring islands. The number of monks was soon increased by fresh arrivals from Ireland and of the whole monastic establishment thus formed Columba was abbot—the first abbot of Iona. But the limits of that island were not sufficient for his restless energies. He crossed over to Mull and traversed the whole district which in modern times is named Argyll, and which was then inhabited by the Irish, or Dalriadian Scots. His kinsman, Conal was king, the people were Christians, but it appears only in name, for they had few, if any, churches and few, if any, monastic establishments. The want was supplied by Columba. Churches were built, monasteries established, filled with monks from Iona, and life and energy were infused into that faith which was almost dead.

Columba was not yet satisfied. Eastward of the Dalriadian Colony and northward, beyond the Grampians, dwelt a people called the Picts. Their origin is uncertain. They may have been of Scythian, or perhaps of Sarmatian origin, but when the light of history is first thrown upon Caledonia they are found there. Fierce and brave, they differed somewhat from the Scots, but they had the same desire of shedding blood, “and all more eager to shroud their villainous faces in bushy hair than to cover with decent clothing those parts of their body which required it.”‡ A terror to the Britons, a danger to the Romans, they had frequently devastated Roman territory; and the valour with which, under the heroic leadership of Galgacus, they defended their liberty against the legions of Agricola, has been recorded

\* P. 215. No tree, little tillage, and rocks everywhere:

† *Adamnan*, p. 177. Montalambert, Book IX., Chap. I. “Great oaks such as the sterile and wind-beaten soil of their islet could not produce had to be brought from the neighbouring shore.”

‡ *Six old English Chronicles*, p. 307 (*Gildas' History of the Britons*): Gildas is plainly embittered by the recollection of what his own countrymen suffered from these same Picts and Scots.



with admiration by Tacitus.\* They were pagans, worshipping the sun and moon, and holding in special reverence certain fountains and wells. These Picts, Columba now determined to convert to the faith, and neither the ferocity of the people themselves, nor the almost inaccessible regions in which they dwelt could serve as an obstacle to his intrepid zeal. He crossed the Grampians, sailed in his light-built skiff through the Ness, sought out the people in their homes and entered as an unwelcome guest the palace of their king beyond Inverness.† His energy, his earnestness, his enthusiasm, the purity and simplicity of his life, his ardent charity, his sympathy for suffering, his miracles brought conviction even to Pictish minds. Brude, the King, became a Christian, his people, not all at once, but gradually, followed his example, and before Columba died there was no portion of these savage regions, from the Grampians to the Hebrides, from the Hebrides to the Orkneys, in which Christians were not to be found.‡ In these journeys by land and sea Columba spent much of his time, the remainder being spent at Iona with his monks.

At first these monks were all Irish but gradually others came from the Dalriadan Scots, from the Britons, from the Saxons. All lived together within an encircling and protecting rampart, each having his own cell. Within this enclosure also were the carpenter's shop and the smith's forge, the refectory, the hospice, and—most important of all—the church; whilst outside was the mill, as well as shelter for horses and cattle. Adamnan speaks of the monk as a soldier, his enemies being his own corrupt passions, and the weapons he had to use being labour, mortification and prayer. In Iona these weapons were not allowed to rust. It was the monks who tilled the fields, gathered the crops, threshed and ground the corn, and baked the bread; and while some worked in the forge or carpenter's shop, others fished in the surrounding sea, or, perhaps, shared with Columba the toils and hardships of his journeys. Nor was study neglected, and Adamnan's writings show that in his time at least the Latin and Greek languages were cultivated with success. Prayer was said in common at certain stated times during the day, and sometimes in the night, the bell sounded and the monks rose from sleep, and passed into the church to pray. Celibacy was strictly observed, silence was enjoined and practised, humility was carried

\* *Agricola*, Cap. 35-37.

† *Adamnan*, pp. 151-2. One of his difficulties was that he did not understand the Pictish language, for it was different from the Irish, and when a Pict came to him at Skye to get baptised, their conversation had to be carried on through an interpreter (*Adam.* p. 62).

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 295.

so far that the monk made his request to the abbot on bended knees, and to the abbot's commands there was rendered by all a strict and unquestioned obedience. There were many rigorous fasts. Every Wednesday and Friday, and every day during Lent, except Sundays and holidays, only one meal was taken in the evening.\*

Neither Columba nor the succeeding abbots were bishops, "an unusual arrangement," says Bede,<sup>†</sup> but there was always a bishop in the community, who had, however, no jurisdiction, and was there only to confer Orders. In the monastery at Iona and in the other houses of the Order as well, both in Scotland and Ireland, the abbot of Iona was supreme. But the rule of Columba was mild, and the relations between him and his monks were those of an affectionate father to his children. He shared their labours in the fields, fasted with even greater rigour than they, and it is said that each evening while reading the Scriptures he remained plunged in cold water, a torture which few would be able to endure. When not otherwise engaged he transcribed books, for he wished that each of his churches would have a supply of books. "There was not an hour," says Adamnan, "in which he was not engaged either in prayer, or reading, or writing, or some other useful work."

To his monastery at Iona many strangers came to visit Columba, to seek his advice and be consoled by him in their afflictions. They came from the Caledonian Scots, from the Picts, from the Saxons, as well as from Ireland. All were welcome and all were hospitably entertained, but it was those who came from Ireland who received the warmest greeting of all, for he loved Ireland with a passionate love—this first of the exiles of Erin. The story that he was never to *see* Ireland, this being part of his penance—and that when he did go to Ireland he was blindfolded is very likely without foundation. But, his visits to Ireland were few, once to attend the Convention of Drumcat, and a few times to visit the monasteries of his Order.‡ And to be away from Ireland he considered the hardest part of

\* The whole life at Iona, with the various incidents which made it up, is dealt with in the Additional Notes to *Adamnan* (pp. 342 *et seq.*) most valuable notes, which have been gathered together by Dr. Reeves with much care and learning.

† *Ecclesiastical History*, Book III., Chap. 4. "That island (Iona) has for its ruler an abbot who is a priest: to whose direction all the province, and even the bishops, contrary to the usual method, are subject according to the example of their first teacher."

‡ "When he went from his own monastery at Durrow to visit Clonmacnoise, the whole community went out to meet him, and such was the veneration in which he was held, that we welcomed him as if he was an angel of God." (*Adamnan*, p. 24.)

his lot,\* and exile from Ireland was to his mind, for an Irishman, the hardest penance he could impose. In his native land everything was dear to him, its mountains and valleys, its rivers and lakes, the song of its birds, the gentleness of its youth, the wisdom of its aged; he loved to steer his bark round its coast, and to see the waves break upon its shore.† He thought that death in Ireland was preferable to life in any other land; and when an Irishman was leaving Iona for Ireland he regarded him almost with envy, as he pathetically said to him "you are returning to the country which you love." When Columba died at Iona (597), without doubt there passed away the most remarkable Irishman that the sixth century had seen.

At the opening of the seventh century, almost all traces of paganism had disappeared in Ireland. There were, no doubt, a few pagans still, but their number was so small, their influence so insignificant, that they may be altogether disregarded; the nation was now fully Christian, and the Church had attained a degree of strength and splendour unequalled in any country of Western Europe. Scattered over the land were many great monasteries with a population equal to that of an ordinary sized town. In these monasteries, the most famous of her children first learned and then taught, and, acquiring for themselves the fame of sanctity and learning, conferred it on the monastic schools in which they were trained and in which they taught. Nor was it only Irish students with whom the Irish monasteries were filled. From the kindred Scots of Caledonia, from the Saxons and Britons, and from Gaul many students came, attracted by the fame of the Irish Schools, and desirous to obtain in these schools that knowledge, which they found it impossible to obtain at home. Among the hospitable Irish these foreign students were treated well. "The Irish," says Bede,‡ "willingly received them all and took care to supply them with food, and also to furnish them with books to read, and gave them their teaching gratis."

We do not know so much of the purely secular schools where laymen taught and laymen learned, but that such schools existed, and that, especially after the Convention of Drumcat, when they were organised on a new and better basis, they reached a high degree of efficiency is undoubted.¶ In these schools were taught poetry, history, and law, and the training was long and arduous before degrees in these subjects could be obtained. To know

\* Healy, p. 313.

† *Monks of the West*, Book IX., Chap. 2. *Adamnan*, pp. 285-7.  
(Additional Notes.)

‡ *Ecclesiastical History*, Book III., Chap. 27.

¶ Hyde: *Literary History of Ireland*, p. 241.



the laws that were passed and the judgments of famous Brehons that were given and to interpret them in accordance with justice, was the business of the Brehons: to record events—usually in verse—was the business of the historian; but on the poet a harder task was imposed. With all forms of poetry he should be perfectly familiar, and when asked by his chief, or king, to compose, no matter what the theme given, he should be always ready.\* Battles fought, wars undertaken, voyages and forays, the glories of his chief, the praise of heroes, an elegy for the dead, or again some wild tale, where giants and fairies jostled each other and fact and fable were intermingled—such were in turn his themes.

Hundreds—perhaps thousands—of these tales existed when the Danes came, but they perished by their destroying hands, and but a few, and for the most part only fragments, have survived. The best known of these, which have withstood alike the attacks of time and the destroying fury of the Dane, is the *Tain-bo-Cuailgne*, or as it is sometimes called, the foray of Queen Maeve.† That the Queen of Connaught should bring her whole army into Ulster for no other purpose except to seize a bull, which was somewhat better-looking than one her husband had in his possession, is a sufficiently extravagant and improbable conception; but poetry does not always deal with probability, or with facts, and frequently has to rely upon imagination for its materials; and it would be difficult to find in the whole range of fiction a character to match Cuchullin. On his native Ulster the curse of Faythleen, the Witch, has fallen, and its blighting effect is peculiar and fatal, for it has turned brave men into cowards and wise men into fools. From a land stricken with cowardice and imbecility to seek for help in a great emergency is vain. One man alone, equal to a host in arms, remains to defend Ulster; and neither the Horatii, who kept the bridge nor Hector defending his beloved Ilion, nor Achilles gaining victory for the Greeks, is a more commanding, or even a more pathetic, figure than this “watch-hound watching by Uladh’s gate.”‡ Day after day at the Ford, which marks the boundary of his native Ulster, he meets in single combat the best and most renowned champions in Maeve’s army, and they fall, one after the other, by the might of his invincible arm; and he slays them, not in hatred or in vengeance, not because he wishes their death and rejoices at the sight of their blood, but because stern necessity has

\* Healy, p. 599: O’Curry, *MSS. Materials of Ancient Irish History*, p. 240.

† *Poetical Works of Aubrey de Vere*, Vol. II., pp. 255-343.

‡ De Vere, p. 262.



willed it, and it is the only way in which his native province can be saved.\*

What other works were written by laymen cannot be known, but Dallan Forgal wrote an elegy on St. Columba.† It was Senchan, who had been Dallan's pupil, and who succeeded him as Chief Poet of Ireland, who, though he did not write the *Tain-bo-Cuailgne* himself, at least discovered it after it had been lost,‡ and Cennfaledh, warrior, lawyer and poet, who died in 678, wrote some poems, a grammar and a law tract, and was so accomplished a scholar, that he was called the learned.¶ It is however, the monastic schools of the period which were most appreciated in their own day and are best known in ours. In efficiency and influence the first of the monastic schools was that of Clonmacnoise. Founded by St. Kieran, in 544, it was situated on the Leinster side of the Shannon, some seven miles from Athlone, and one circumstance which favorably influenced its development was that it belonged to no particular tribe.\*\* Freed from local jealousies and restrictions, it was patronised by various tribes, endowed by various princes, and outstripping the mere local fame of other monastic schools, it acquired the dignity and strength of a national college. The Kings of Meath and Connaught—Diarmuid and Guaire—who in life were so often ranged in hostile camps, agreed in their veneration for Clonmacnoise; both endowed it with land, and when they died, both, in accordance with a long-expressed wish, were interred in its consecrated ground. Of its professors we read of Colgu, who wrote both in Latin and in Irish, and who died in 794 ††; and Suibne, another of its professors, who lived in the next century, is described by a Saxon contemporary—Florence of Worcester ‡‡—as “the greatest doctor of the Scots.” It is not certain, but it is not improbable, that among its students was Alcuin, the friend of Charlemagne, whose reputation for scholarship was European—at all events he writes of Colgu as his master and father. |||| Another student was Dicuil, who wrote in Latin

\* De Vere, p. 305. He is especially sorry for the death of his old friend Ferdiá—

“We ate together of the self-same dish  
We couched together 'neath the self-same shield  
Now living man I stand and he lies dead.”

† *Literary History of Ireland*, p. 380.

‡ *Ossianic Society*, Vol. v., p. 125.

|| Healy, 603-604.

\*\* Healy, p. 270.

†† *Ibid.* p. 272.

‡‡ Florence's *Chronicle* at the year 892.

|||| Usher's *Sylloge*, No. XVIII.

an interesting treatise on geography.\* Even during the Danish wars Clonmacnoise flourished, but being plundered and attacked so often, its efficiency was seriously impaired; but when the Danish power was broken and Danish depredations had ceased, the venerable school renewed its vigour and shone out with some of its ancient splendour.

Throughout Ulster and Meath were the monastic schools established by Columba and his successors, all of which were in subjection to the Abbots of Iona, and of these Durrow and Kells are best known. In both, the work of copying manuscripts was much practised, and the art of illuminating manuscripts carried to high perfection. Judging that no efforts were too much in copying and decorating the sacred books, these monks, in the lonely silence of their convent cells, patiently, unceasingly, unsparing of labour, and with an artist's eye for colours, copied and ornamented, and the Book of Kells and the Book of Durrow are still in existence to tell the tale of their labour and their skill. It was not the desire of Giraldus—it did not seem to be his mission—to say anything favourable of Ireland, or anything Irish, and if he does praise he may certainly be believed, for his praise is so rare and given with such evident, even painful, reluctance. But he saw the Book of Kells, and struck with the beauty and finish of the lettering and colouring, he concluded it was the work of an angel, for it could not be the work of human hands.† In these schools, subject to Columba's successors, no scholar of eminence appeared previous to the advent of the Danes, if we except Adamnan, ninth Abbot of Iona. Descended from the princes of Tirconnell, and therefore related to St. Columba, he was born at Donegal, in 624, became monk and priest, and ultimately Abbot of Iona, a position he held till his death, in 704. His high descent, his position as Columba's successor, his great learning, his eminent sanctity, gave him immense influence with his countrymen; nor did he ever use this influence except for the advantage of his country and his religion. Seeing the absurdity of the Irish Church cutting herself adrift from the rest of the Christian world, even in matters of discipline, he laboured hard to induce the monks of his own Order to conform to the Roman system of computing Easter. Against discouragement and obstinacy he battled earnestly and long, and at last, towards the close of his own earthly career, he had the satisfaction of seeing the Columban monasteries of Ireland fall into line with the rest of the Irish Church, in adopting the Roman Easter. Iona had not, even at his death, abandoned its ancient and

\* Healy, p. 281.

† Giraldus speaks of a Book at Kildare, but Petrie thinks that his references are to the *Book of Kells*. (*Topography, Distinction II., chap. 38.*)

erroneous system, and it appeared that there at least his arguments and entreaties were vain. But the good seed had been sown though it had not yet borne fruit, and Adamnan was but a few years in his grave, when Iona also yielded and carried out the wishes of its distinguished Abbot. At the last Feis of Tara, he was enabled to have a law passed, since known as Adamnan's Law, prohibiting women from taking part in battle. Nor was it only among his own countrymen that he was respected. The exiled king of Northumbria, Aldfrid, during his stay in Ireland, met and loved the learned monk of Iona,\* and afterwards when fortune changed and when the exile became the monarch, Adamnan was able to use his influence with advantage to his own countrymen. The prisoners taken in Ireland, in the time of Egfrid, were kept in Northumbria in the position of slaves, and when Aldfrid became king, Adamnan journeyed from Iona, crossing the dangerous currents of the Solway Firth; and appealing to the new king, in his palace at Northumbria, he had the Irish prisoners released and sent back to their country and kin.†

Of Adamnan's great piety and learning no doubt has ever been raised, and of his character both strangers as well as Irishmen have ever spoken with respect. Passing by native estimates of him, which might be charged with partiality, we have the testimony of Bede that "he was a virtuous and learned man, with a profound knowledge of the Scriptures."‡ And of his principal work,|| "The Life of St. Columba," Pinkerton, a learned Scotchman, has said that "it is the most complete piece of such biography that Europe can boast of during the whole Middle Ages,\*\* a generous eulogy for a Scotchman to pronounce, especially in dealing with anything Irish. Thus far for the Columban monasteries, which were for the most part in the north of Ireland.

But if we would search for the greatest of the northern monastic schools, we shall not find it among those of the Columban Order, but rather in the School of Bangor, built on the shores of Belfast Lough, and looking out upon the ever-restless sea. Founded by St. Comgall (559), it soon grew in influence and importance, and before Comgal died three thousand monks observed his rule, the larger portion of whom were in Bangor

\* *Adamnan*; Appendix to Preface, p. 44; he was often called the *Alumnus of Adamnan*.

† *Adamnan*, p. 186; *Introd.*, p. 45.

‡ *Ecclesiastical History*, Book v., chap. 15.

|| Adamnan also wrote a book on the Holy Places of Jerusalem, a work highly praised by Bede, and from which he largely quotes. (Chap. 16, 17.)

\*\* Healy, p. 343.



itself.\* Columbanus and Gall were educated there in the sixth century, so also, in the ninth century was Dungal, who did such service against the Iconoclasts, and, at a later stage, St. Malachy, the bishop and reformer of Armagh.

What Bangor was to the north, Lismore was to the southern province. It was founded by Carthage in the year 635. For forty years Carthage had already laboured at Rahan, in the King's County. He had founded a monastery there, it had grown to fame under his rule, its schools attracted scholars from afar, and no less than eight hundred monks were gathered within its bounds. But jealousy sometimes enters the cloister; the monastery of Durrow was near and was being over-shadowed by its neighbour at Rahan; its monks felt that Carthage was the cause; they were influential with the ruling prince of the territory and induced him to expel Carthage from Rahan, which that prince did, with every circumstance of indignity.† Seeking a new home, Carthage travelled much, and at last the wanderer found rest at Lismore, and in the midst of scenic beauty of a high order, he built his monastery. Looking southwards he had behind him the mountains of Knockmeldown, around him was the valley of the Blackwater, where nature had been prodigal of her charms, and at his feet was the river itself rushing ever onward to the sea.‡ The new school acquired fame so rapidly that it soon overshadowed all the schools of Munster, and many were its famous scholars. Aldfrid, the Northumbrian king, was educated there, among its monks was Turlogh, King of Thomond, who resigned the crown in order to become a monk, and among its best-known students was Cathaldus, bishop of Tarentum.|| At Cork and Ross, at Mungret and Inniscaltra, were other schools in Munster, but none of them attained the position, or acquired the fame of Lismore. The schools of Kildare, Cloonenagh, and Glendalough diffused the blessings of knowledge and religion throughout Leinster, while Connaught had the schools of Clonfert, Tuam and Mayo.

With the life and labours of St. Kevin, Glendalough has been always associated, and Clooneenagh beheld its most distinguished student in Ængus the Culdee.\*\* Except that the school of Tuam

\* Lanigan's *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. II., p. 62.

† Healy, p. 450. "It was a cruel and an evil deed—it broke the old man's heart and brought down his grey hairs in sorrow to the grave." Nor has Dr. Healy any great doubt that jealousy was the cause of the Saint's expulsion.

‡ Healy, p. 453.

|| *Ibid.*, pp. 457-469.

\*\* He was a member of the Community of Tallaght, where under the rule of St. Maelruan, a stricter monastic discipline was observed than then prevailed in the other monasteries of the time. As a member of this com-



was founded by St. Jarlath, there seems to be no other distinction to which it can lay claim. Mayo founded by St. Coleman and tenanted by those Saxon monks, who still adhered to the old Irish Easter, was not without distinction, and was so much frequented by Saxons, that it was called Mayo of the Saxons. The founder of Clonfert was Brendan the Navigator, and one of its abbots was Cumman, who in the Paschal controversy acquitted himself so well.

Our conception of an Irish monastery in those days is a number of buildings, grouped together and surrounded by an enclosure within which dwelt a multitude of pious, self-denying men, living in community, practising the same devotions, undergoing the same hardships, chastising themselves with the same mortifications, bound by a common rule and subject to the same superior, whose will they recognised as law. These monks differed according to the time in which they lived. An ancient Catalogue of the Irish Saints is quoted by Usher\* and divides these Saints into three Orders. The first Order † was in the time of St. Patrick, consisted of holy bishops, 350 in number, founders of churches, worshipping one head, viz., Christ, following one leader—Patrick—having one tonsure and one celebration of Mass, and one Easter, which they celebrated after the Vernal Equinox. "They did not reject the service of women, because being grounded on Christ, the Rock, they feared not the wind of temptation." In the second Order there were few bishops but many priests, in number 300; they had different rites of celebrating and different rules of living, and they shunned the society of women, and excluded them from their monasteries. The third Order, 100 in number, were priests but few bishops; they lived on herbs and alms, and despised all things earthly. They had different rites for celebrating and a different tonsure, for some had the crown shaven, but others had not. The time of the First Order was to the middle of the sixth century; the Second Order to the end of the same century, while the time of the Third Order extended to the year of the great plague (664). The First Order in sanctity shone out resplendent like the sun,

munity he would be specially entitled to call himself, Ceile-de or servant of God. His personal sanctity would emphasize his claim to be so called. In his case the term *culdee* may be supposed as a term denoting "rigid monastic observance, especially in the order of divine service, and to have been applied to him as one who had contributed to the devotional compositions of the church, and also lived according to the strictest sect of his religion." (Reeves', *The Culdees*—R. I. Academy Trans., Vol. XXIV., p: 127.)

\* Works, Vol. VI., pp. 477-9.

† Most of the First Order were foreigners—Franks, Romans and Britons. (Healy, pp. 107-8.)

the Second shone like the moon, the Third like the stars. Most of these saints belonged to monasteries, but not all, for there were some fervent souls who loved even greater privations than those prescribed by monastic rule, and this, it seems, was a special characteristic of the later Order of Saints. Solitude, silence, the severest penances, the most rigid fasts, the greatest mortifications—these were what they chose for their earthly inheritance. They were anchorets rather than monks.

In the valley of Glendalough St. Kevin lived for seven years the life of a solitary “without fire, without a roof, almost without human food.”\* On the shores of a lake in that beautiful valley he dwelt for a time in the hollow of a tree, and St. Kevin’s bed, where his short periods of sleep were taken, can still be seen—a cave in the face of an overhanging cliff, only four feet square and little more than four feet high. The natural beauties of Glendalough and the picturesque ruins in which it abounds attract many visitors; and the thoughtful traveller as he thinks of St. Kevin sleeping up the face of the cliff, like the eagle in his eyrie, cannot help contrasting the material ages of a later date with those far-off ages of vivid faith. To these scenes of silence and solitude St. Kevin was attached, for they allowed him to hold undisturbed communion with God; but a shepherd, who came to look after his flocks, broke the silence of his retreat. Many others followed in his footsteps; the saint was no longer allowed to remain alone; and the entreaties of his visitors that he should leave his lonely abode were so earnest and persistent, that at last he reluctantly did so, and, further down the valley, he built a monastery, which soon grew to eminence as the monastery and school of Glendalough, and in which many a scholar and holy man were trained. For eighteen months before his death, St. Carthage of Lismore retired from his monks and lived alone in a cave†; and Ængus the Culdee lived for a time in a solitude near the present town of Maryborough, and every day recited fifty psalms in his cell, fifty in the open air, and fifty with his body plunged in cold water.‡ Many other holy men there were, whose austerities were as great, but whose names are less known.

But Irish monks and anchorets, Irish saints and scholars were not, during the period, confined to Ireland. The work commenced by Columba was continued by his successors; the monastery of Iona was incessantly recruited from Ireland; and of its twelve first abbots all but one were Irish and of the race

\* Healy, pp. 418 *et seq.*

† Healy, p. 454.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 407.

of Tirconnell.\* Among the kindred Scots of Argyle, monasteries arose which were filled with Irish monks and which became centres of missionary activity themselves. These monks of Iona extended their labours among the southern Picts on the East coast, and in these regions, where Ninian first taught and laboured, the flickering embers of the Christian faith were kindled into flame by Irish zeal.† The Picts beyond the Grampians heard the tidings of Christianity from the same Irish monks and were persuaded by Irish lips to forsake for ever their heathen gods. Nor were these zealous preachers dismayed by the stormy and treacherous seas that rage round the Western and Northern shores of Caledonia. The numerous islands on these coasts were visited, churches built, and the people won over from their pagan errors; nor did these adventurous soldiers of the Cross desist until they had passed the Ultima Thule of the ancients, and from the testimony of Dicuil the geographer, they penetrated to Iceland, where the Northmen, on their arrival there in the ninth century, found Irish crosses, Irish croziers and Irish bells.‡

With equal energy and success they laboured among the Anglo-Saxons. Just south of the Southern Picts was Northumbria, extending from the Firth of Forth to the mouth of the Humber. Its British and Christian inhabitants had been driven into the mountains of Wales, or reduced to slavery in their own land by the new pagan masters of Northumbria. Feeling bitterly the humiliation of defeat and the harsh treatment they received, they entertained the strongest antipathy to the Anglo-Saxons; and while they enjoyed the consolations of Christianity themselves, they refused with sullen selfishness to share its blessings with their conquerors.|| The patience and zeal of Paulinus had won over the Northumbrian king, Edwin, and many of his people to Christianity, but the triumph of the Gospel was short-lived. Hatred often brings men together when love has failed, and in their hatred of the Anglo-Saxons the Britons willingly enrolled themselves under the banner of Penda, the pagan king of Mercia, who had long coveted the Northumbrian province. The allied forces marched into Edwin's kingdom and at Hatfield (633) he was disastrously overthrown, and

\* *Adamnan*, p. 342. The genealogical table given by Reeves, though it does not as the author points out, shows that the abbacy of Iona was transmitted in lineal succession, "it demonstrates the existence of clan-ship, even in a religious community."

† It has been observed that St. Patrick in his Epistle to Caroticus speaks with special severity of the Picts, who, at least the Southern Picts, had been converted to Christianity, but soon after relapsed into paganism (*Morris' St. Patrick*, 228).

‡ Healy, p. 289.

|| *Monks of the West*, Book VIII., Chap. 2. Bede, Book II., Chap. 22.



once more Northumbria relapsed into paganism. A few years later, when Oswald became king of Northumbria, these disasters were reversed ; he shook off the yoke of the Mercians and Britons and Northumbria was again free. In exile among the Scots he had learned to become a Christian, and when he became independent king of Northumbria, he invited the monks of Iona to re-establish Christianity in his kingdom. Aidan\* and some monks came and founded a monastery at Lindisfarne, of which Aidan became Abbot, as well as being bishop. More fortunate than Paulinus, the work of these Irish missionaries was destined to endure. Lindisfarne became another Iona, whence other monasteries, such as Whitby and Melrose, were founded, and whence zealous missionaries went forth to preach the Gospel. The surrounding people were hard to convert and clung with stubbornness to their pagan errors, but the piety, the patience, the missionary activity, the self-sacrifice of these Irish monks conquered all. Within twenty years, after Aidan's coming to Lindisfarne, Northumbria was entirely Christian. Essex and Mercia were also converted exclusively by Irish monks, who, besides, shared with the Roman monks the labour and glory of converting Wessex and East Anglia. "They rivalled" says Montalambert, "the zeal of the Roman monks, but showed much more perseverance and gained much more success."†

In continental Europe Irish missionaries also laboured and with conspicuous success. Towards the close of the sixth century, there left Ireland and passed over to France an Irish monk whose fame was to rival that of Columba. Like him he was to be the founder of many monasteries and the spiritual father of many children. This was St. Columbanus. Born in Leinster (559) and educated at Bangor, he became monk and priest and, selecting foreign lands as the scene of his labours, he left Ireland with twelve companions (590), crossed over to England and arrived in France the same year. He and his companions made their way to the kingdom of Burgundy, where they were well received by Gontran, its king. Here, first at Annegray and afterwards at Luxueil, Columbanus established monasteries, by far the most famous of which was Luxueil. Situated under the shadow of the Vosges mountains, the place was of some importance in Roman times, and some remains were left of Roman temples and villas.‡ The tide of barbarian conquest had so often

\* Of Aidan and his companions Bede speaks with enthusiasm (Book III., Chap. 5) "it was the highest commendation of his doctrine with all men, that he taught no otherwise than he and his followers had lived—he delighted in distributing immediately among the poor whatever was given him by kings and rich men."

† *Monks of the West*, Book XI., Chaps. I and 2:

‡ *Ibid.*, Book VII.



rolled over the district that, except these ruined buildings, every trace of ancient culture had disappeared. The fields were uncultivated, agriculture was neglected, the forests had extended their sway, and the rule of the wild beast had supplanted that of man. Nor was the physical aspect of the country an inapt representation of its moral and religious condition. The fervour of those warlike converts, who fought with Clovis at Tolbiac, had not been transmitted to their descendants; many of the people had relapsed into paganism, the secular clergy were remarkable for everything but zeal, the bishops did not hold synods,\* the nobles were little better than hunters and robbers, and a descendant of Clovis and the pious Clotilde, shrinking from the obligations and restraints of matrimony, lived, like an eastern monarch, with his concubines. In contrast with this irreligion and immorality the most heroic virtue soon appeared. Columbanus and his companions lived with the wild beasts, and with as little luxury. The grass of the fields, the wild fruit, the bark of the trees were partly their support;† the charity of their neighbours supplied the rest. This was before Luxueil was built; but even in Luxueil the mortification was great, for the rule of Columbanus was severe. Prayer and labour were incessant, but one meal was allowed in the day, and for what in later times would be considered a trivial fault the most rigorous penances were imposed. Yet these rigors attracted, instead of repelling, the surrounding natives. The serfs found refuge at Luxueil and were received among its monks, and the long-haired nobles of the Franks and Burgundians left their castles and their lands and, as monks, were rarely the superiors, frequently the equals and sometimes the inferiors and subjects of their former slaves. Luxueil soon became the most populous monastery in Gaul, and the heart of Columbanus must have been glad.

But the Saint was not without his sorrows. With perverse obstinacy he still clung to the Irish method of computing Easter; the Gaulish bishops remonstrated. Columbanus advised them, with some asperity, to hold synods more frequently, and thus the relations between the bishops and the monk were never cordial and often strained.‡ But with the young king, Thierry, who now sat upon the throne of Gontran, and his grandmother Brunehault, his difficulties were greater still. Thierry had

\* Gibbon, Vol. II., pp. 562-3:

† Healy, p. 373. Columbanus loved to retire into the forest away from his monks, and there he became familiar and friendly with the wild animals. "The birds would pick the crumbs from his feet; the squirrels hide themselves under his cowl; the hungry wolves harmed him not, he slept in a cave where a bear had its den." (Healy.)

‡ Healy, pp. 374-5:

Christian instincts, and if he could have escaped from the corrupting influence of his grandmother, he would have lived as became a Christian king. But his will was weak and that of Brunehault was strong. Greedy of absolute power, blind to religious obligations, deaf to the voice of nature itself, she encouraged Thierry to keep concubines instead of sharing his throne with a lawful queen. The struggle between this wicked old woman and Columbanus was bitter and prolonged. Fearless of danger, negligent of consequences, with the zeal of an apostle and the courage of a martyr, he attacked both Brunehault and Thierry, menaced them with the vengeance of heaven; and of morality and the sanctity of marriage was ever the most intrepid champion. For a time force triumphed. Columbanus was expelled from Luxueil, and sent as far as Nantes on his way to Ireland. Thierry had made all necessary preparations for sending him away, and at Nantes a vessel was waiting to convey him back to Ireland, much against his will. But the forces of nature themselves seemed to be enlisted on his side. As if in anger with his persecutors, the sea was violently agitated, the winds blew their strongest, the waves threatened to engulf the vessel and more than once the vessel was flung back upon the strand. The master of the vessel, terrified and conquered in this contest with nature, at last dropped his troublesome passenger and Columbanus was allowed to go free. He turned his steps into Neustria, thence to Austrasia, and finally settled at Bregenz, on Lake Constance, where, with his friend St. Gall, he laboured for two years. In 612, Thierry defeated Theodobert, became master of Helvetia, and Columbanus had to fly from his ancient enemy. Crossing the Alps, he entered Lombardy where he was well received and where he established a monastery at Bobbio, which he made "the citadel of orthodoxy against the Arians, and lighted there a focus of knowledge and instruction, which was long the light of Northern Italy." Before his death, in 615, Columbanus could count many monasteries which observed his monastic rule,\* but before the seventh century closed, they had become more numerous and were filled with more monks than he could ever in life have contemplated even in his wildest dreams.

\* Columbanus's *Penitential*, which was compiled for the use of his monks, is founded largely on the *Penitential of St. Finian*, and adopts 23 of its Canons: Columbanus adding to these 19 more Canons. The 37th Canon enacts that if a *layman* held any communication with heretics, *even unknowingly*, he should for 90 days take his place in church separated from other Christians and among the Catechumens; but if he had acted *knowingly*, and therefore through contempt, he should do penance for more than a year, and for two more years he should abstain from wine and meat. (Moran, *Essays on the Early Irish Church*, p 270.)

Lure and Roman-Moutier, Beze and St. Ursanne and Remiremont in Burgundy ; Fontenelle and Joumiegues on the Seine ; Jouarre and Rebais on the Marne ; Leuconais near Amiens ; St. Centule on the Somme ; St. Bertin among the Morini—these were only some of the monasteries founded by the zealous children of Luxueil in France and Belgium, whilst in Switzerland, St. Gall succeeded so well, that his memory is still revered as the greatest of her Christian missionaries, and a town and Canton of Switzerland still bear the name of St. Gall.\*

Not less zealous than the disciples of Columbanus were other Irishmen who laboured in continental lands. An Irishman, † Fridolin, founded a monastery at Sackingen on the Rhine, as early as 511, and preached to the nations on both banks of the river ; St. Fiacre ‡ preached the Gospel and cultivated the fields near Meaux. St. Fursey, laborious preacher and famous visionary, ruled as abbot on the banks of the Marne (633). || St. Kilian suffered martyrdom for the faith at Wurzburg (689) ; a little earlier (656) St. Livinius suffered martyrdom among the people of Brabant ; whilst the apostle of the Frisians was Wilibrod, an Anglo-Saxon, but educated in Ireland. It was an Irishman, St. Virgilius,\*\* who finished the work begun by St. Boniface—the conversion of the Bavarians—and who died Archbishop of Salzburg ; and away by the waters of the Gulf of Taranto was an Irishman educated under Carthage of Lismore—Cathaldus, bishop of Tarentum. Thus may be traced the foot-

\* *Monks of the West*, Book VII.

Miss Stokes gives the names of 63 of the first teachers who during the 7th Century spread the Columban rule from Luxueil. Except the name of St. Gall they are for the most part unfamiliar ; but they are Latinized, and in consequence the Irish forms of the names are not discernable. ("Three Months in the Forests of France," pp. 254-5. Appendix VI.)

† Alzog's *Church History*, Vol. II., p. 74.

‡ *Monks of the West*, Book VII.

|| His monastery was at Lagny, six miles to the north of Paris. Miss Stokes has sought with great patience the existing monuments associated with his life and works. She personally visited the Island of Innisquin in Lough Corrib, where he was born, sketched the ruins of the church of Killursa, near Headford, in the County of Galway, which he founded, traced his steps into Suffolk, in England, where he preached, and in France travelled from Lagny to Mezerolles, near the latter of which town the "Chapelle de St. Fursey" stands. ("Three Months in the Forests of France," pp. 134-177.) The account of his visions, which she gives in detail, is given in smaller compass by Bede, who declares that "a brother of our monastery is still living, who is wont to declare that a very sincere and religious man told him, that he had seen Fursey himself in the province of East-Anglia, and heard these visions from his mouth." (*Eccles' History*, Book III., Chap. 19.)

\* \* Healy, p. 573.



prints of Irish missionaries throughout Europe—at Taranto in the south, at Bobbio in the North of Italy, among the Alemanni of Switzerland, in the monasteries of the Franks, among the Morini by the North Sea, in Bavaria and Carinthia ; everywhere they are found, facing every danger, enduring every hardship, caring for nothing but to extend the empire of the Cross.

Ledwich and others have dwelt on the diversity of liturgy in the early Irish Church, have magnified the disputes about the tonsure and Easter, as if they were doctrinal errors, and have pointed out that such a church was not, and could not be in union with the Church of Rome. But diversity of liturgy is not the same as diversity of doctrine, whether the coronal tonsure, or that of Simon Magus,\* was worn by Irish monks was not, after all, of vital importance, and the dispute about Easter, however regrettable it might be, was only a matter of discipline in the Church and in no way interfered with the purity and integrity of its beliefs. In the nature and number of its Sacraments, in its acceptance of revelation and its faith in revealed truths, in its conception of the Incarnation, of the Real Presence, and of Transubstantiation, in devotion to the Mother of Christ, as the Mother of God,† in obedience to the Bishop of Rome as Supreme Pastor and Teacher of the Universal Church,‡ it was as orthodox as any church could be. Nor was the boast of St. Columbanus an empty one when, in his letter to Pope Boniface, he asserted that no heresy and no schism had ever crept into the Irish Church. This bold statement has been as boldly challenged, and it is pointed out that Celestius, who in the fifth century was the principal supporter of Pelagius in his errors, was an Irishman. The heretic's creed is usually indefinite and that of Celestius was no exception to the rule. He equivocated, he shifted his ground, he lied to the reigning Pope, and through the clouds of equivocation and mendacity the precise doctrines he taught are not easily seen. But some points, at least, are clear. The Church has always held, with emphasis, that in Adam all men have sinned, that as a result of his sin every man is born

\* In the Irish tonsure the hair was cut off in front from ear to ear, the hair on the crown being untouched. It was called St. John's tonsure, and by the Anglo-Saxons that of Simon Magus. But why it got this name is not clear. (*Catholic Dictionary*.)

† Moran's *Essays*, pp. 224 *et seq.*; especially the Litany taken from the Leabhar Breac.

‡ The Letter of St. Columbanus ought to suffice on this point, where he styles the reigning Pope—"Head of all the churches of Europe ; Pastor of pastors ; mystic pilot of the ship spiritual, that is the Church." (Moran, p. 97.) In the same letter he warned him to preserve the *Apostolic faith*, which would certainly seem to imply that he had, as Pope, a Commission to do so (p. 99).

with inherited culpability, which renders him unfit for association with God, that the vision of the human intellect has been darkened and blurred, that the will has become enfeebled for good and the whole nature tainted and corrupted, that the forces of sensuality have become potent for evil and that it is only by the grace of God, liberally given, rightly used, operating interiorly and mysteriously, that the human soul can secure its eternal destiny. In opposition to this, Celestius held\* that Adam's sin affected only himself, that all men are born like himself without sin and that by their merely natural gifts, unaided by interior grace, they can acquire sanctity and salvation. These errors have been called Pelagianism, because it was Pelagius, a British monk, who was first identified with them. Perhaps Celestius was also British : it is at least doubtful if he was Irish and he who seeks only after historic truth and is not concerned to defend or defame the Irish Church, will think it improbable that a church which could scarcely be said to have an existence before St. Patrick's time, was already the training-ground of a formidable heresiarch, and he will note that neither in St. Patrick's time nor subsequently has it been proved that Pelagianism established itself in Ireland. Nor did the Arian heresy nor any of its numerous offshoots ever strike root in Irish soil ; and the angry controversies on the natures and wills of Christ, which furnished such abundant materials for subtle disputants and which so long disturbed the peace of the whole Church, gave no occupation to Irish scholars. Traversing the well-worn paths of orthodoxy, they carefully shunned the seductive byeways of error, viewed these polemical contests from afar with languid interest and, leaving to heretical ingenuity the work of doctrinal innovation, they were content with the humbler and more useful role of being saints and scholars in their own land, or being missionaries and martyrs abroad.

If the Church of Columbanus and Carthage be compared with the modern Irish Church which claims to be its successor, they will be found to be in complete accord. The Baptism of the former church, like that of the latter, was with water, was considered essential to salvation and could be received but once.† Confirmation, as a Sacrament, is referred to by St. Patrick in his Epistle to Caroticus, and by St. Cummian in his Penitential.‡ The ancient Irish held that the Eucharist was a great Sacrifice in which the body and blood of Christ were offered up in the Mass in atonement for the sins of men, and a

\* Alzog, Vol. I., pp. 401-3. Healy, p. 40.

† Salmon : *The Ancient Irish Church*, pp. 59-66. Extracts from the Penitentials of St. Finnian and St. Cummian.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

Sacrament\* in which the same body and blood were found as long as the consecrated particles remained. Their Sacrament of Penance differed from the modern in no respect, except that the penances imposed were more severe.† The accounts given of the last illness of St. Eugene of Ardstraw‡ and of St. Coleman show that the Sacrament of Extreme Unction was conferred; and between their Sacraments of Holy Orders|| and Matrimony\*\* and those of a later date no difference can be discerned. They believed in Purgatory†† and in the efficacy of the Invocation of Saints; devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary was a marked feature of the Early Irish Church; and its acceptance of the Pope's Supremacy was unquestioned and unequivocal.

The only serious dispute with Rome was as to the manner of computing Easter.‡‡ The Paschal computation of the Irish was that introduced by St. Patrick which then and long after was the same as that of Rome. In making this computation they had the Jewish Cycle of 84 years, never celebrated the Pasch before the Vernal Equinox, and, unlike the Jews and some of the churches of the East, never, except on Sunday. It is therefore with great injustice that they have sometimes been branded with the opprobrious name of Quartadecimans.|||| But the Jewish Cycle was incorrect, and at Alexandria, where astronomy was studied and understood, its errors were detected and exposed, and a more correct cycle of 19 years substituted. The Romans adopted the Alexandrian Cycle but seem not to have understood the Alexandrian method of computation; errors arose, nor was it until 525, that uniformity was established between Alexandria and Rome. These changes were not known in Ireland for some time and when they were they were regarded by the Irish with suspicion. Devotedly attached to the memory of their Saints, they regarded as an innovation whatever clashed with their Saints' practices and teaching, nor could they willingly believe that the Paschal system was wrong, which was introduced by St. Patrick and sanctified by the approval of St. Columba.

\* Moran's *Essays*, pp. 241-2; also p. 166.

† Reeves *on the Culdees*. R. I. Academy Translations, Vol. xxiv., Pt. 2 pp. 208-9. For abusing a servant the punishment was 100 blows on the hand. Moran, pp. 250 *et seq.*

‡ Salmon, p. 110.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 114.

\* \* *Ibid.*, p. 142.

†† *Ibid.*, p. 148. Usher (Vol. iv., pp. 269-71) admits that prayers were said for the dead, but only for those *who were in bliss*, yet it might be asked why pray for those who had already attained happiness?

‡‡ Alzog, Vol. II., p. 65; Lanigan, Vol. II., p. 374.

|||| The Quartadecimans were those who celebrated Easter on the 14th day of the Moon, whether it fell on Sunday or not.



Solemnly admonished by Pope Honorius I. that they were wrong,\* a Synod was held at Old Leighlin (630) to discuss the question, but no agreement was arrived at. The Canon passed at the instance of St. Patrick that all matters which could not be settled in Ireland be sent to Rome for decision was then remembered, and delegates were appointed to proceed to Rome. Those delegates on their return reported that they had seen Easter celebrated at Rome by men from all the churches of the world, and that all these churches agreed with Rome. A Synod was then held at Moylena (633) and the Irish system was abandoned for the Roman and thus, as far as the south of Ireland was concerned, the question was settled. The monasteries of the north of Ireland, influenced and dominated by Iona, still held out, maintaining that what was good enough for St. Columba was good enough for them, and to these a very learned and holy man appealed—Cummian, abbot and bishop of Clonfert. He examined the various cycles of the Jews, Greeks, Latins and Egyptians, ransacked Ecclesiastical history and the decrees of Synods and Councils, drew arguments from Scripture and from the writings of St. Cyprian, St. Jerome, St. Augustine and others, and finally, appealing to their common sense, he asked them to contemplate the absurdity of their position—that alone in the whole world the Scots and Britons were right, while Rome and Jerusalem and Alexandria and Antioch were in error.† But learning and argument and entreaty were vain. These stubborn monks would not abandon the system of St. Columba, nor was it until the closing years of the seventh century, and then only at the earnest entreaty of Adamnan, that they abandoned their erroneous system and adopted the more correct computation of Rome.

Among the Anglo-Saxons the same disputes and differences existed as among the Irish. The Roman monks followed the Roman Easter, the Irish that of their own country; and as these two classes of monks lived and laboured side by side among the Anglo-Saxons, the people witnessed the scandal of one class of monks celebrating Easter weeks ahead of others. Among the people, each system had its adherents; even in the palace of the Northumbrian king uniformity did not exist, and while the king was celebrating the Paschal festivity, the queen was still practising the rigours of the Lenten fast. To establish uniformity a synod was held at Whitby (660) where the whole matter was debated and discussed. The Roman system was

\* Healy, p. 235.

† Usher's *Sylloge*, No. XI., Vol. IV., p. 432. The date of Cummian's Epistle is given as 634, and for a monk of that age the amount of learning shown is indeed remarkable; nor is the writer's learning and ability more remarkable than his humility.

defended with great ability by Wilfred, afterwards Archbishop of York, the Irish system by Colman, abbot of Lindisfarne, with perhaps less ability but with no less zeal. King Oswy, who was present and favourable to Colman, was converted by the arguments of Wilfred, and the Synod, following his example, adopted the Roman system.\* With an obstinacy little worthy of a saint and little in keeping with his own high character, Colman refused to submit, and taking with him the bones of his predecessor, Aidan, and accompanied by a number of monks—Irish and Saxon—as stubborn as himself, he left Lindisfarne and went back to Ireland. He established a monastery on an island off the west coast—the island of Innisboffin—an island bleak and barren and waveworn as Lindisfarne itself, and there he spent the closing years of his life, practising the greatest austerities and listening to the wild wailing of the sea. In 716, Iona itself abandoned its ancient errors to which it had so tenaciously clung.

Lanigan complains that the accounts left of events in the eighth century are meagre and incomplete, perhaps owing to neglect, perhaps—which is more likely—to the loss of documents, but we have sufficient materials to show that the Church of that period was not unworthy of its past. The monasteries of Armagh, Clonmacnoise, Lismore, Bangor, Clonard and others continued to flourish and acquire fame, and from their cloisters a succession of saintly and learned men went forth who spread afar the fame of the Schools in which they were trained. The missionary spirit of Irishmen was as active as ever, and among them was Alto, who founded a monastery near Munich (750) called after its founder Altmunster,† Rumold, an Irish bishop, martyred near Mechlin,‡ (775) Virgilius of Salzburg,|| among the first, if not the first, to proclaim the opinion of the sphericity of the earth and the existence of the antipodes, and Cummian, who died at Bobbio (735), so venerated by the Lombard king Luitfrand, that he adorned the Irish monk's tomb with precious stones.\*\* And what has been written of two other Irishmen by a monk of St. Gall is remarkable. "When the illustrious

\* Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, Book III., Chap. 25.

Colman had St. Columba on his side, but Wilfred was able to show that St. Peter was on his own side and this it was that determined the King to change, for St. Peter was the door-keeper of Heaven and he was unwilling to contradict him, lest when he (Oswy) came to the gates of Heaven, there should be no one to admit him, St. Peter being his adversary.

† Lanigan, Vol. III., p. 189.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

|| Usher's *Sylloge*, No. 17.

\* \* Lanigan, Vol. III., p. 171.

Charlemagne began to reign alone in the western part of the world (772) and literature was everywhere almost forgotten, it happened that two Scots of Ireland came over to the shores of France men, incomparably skilled in human learning and in the holy Scriptures.\* These were Clemens and Albinus; the former, Charlemagne kept to teach in France, the latter he placed at the head of the School of Pavia.

\* Lanigan, Vol. III., p. 208.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### *The First Christian Kings.*

Much war in Continental Europe from the fifth to the ninth century—Ireland during the same period never invaded but once—yet seldom at peace, because the chiefs quarrelled among themselves—Part of Caledonia colonized from Dalriadia—Reign of Diarmid—Battle of Cuildevne—Tara cursed—Reign of Aedh MacAinmire—Convention of Drumcat—Battle of Dunbolg—Reign of Donal—Battle of Moyrath—The Plague in Ireland—Reign of Finachta—Invasion of the Northumbrians—The last Feis of Tara—The Boru tribute abolished and revived—Battles of Allen and Ballyshannon.

FROM the fifth to the ninth century there were many wars in the countries of Continental Europe. Goths, Huns, Vandals, Ostrogoths and Lombards, each in turn had swept like a desolating flood over the provinces of the Roman Empire, leaving death and desolation in its track.\* Before the sixth century dawned, the Empire of the West fell, and while the century was yet young, the Ostrogoths ruled in Italy, the Visigoths in Spain the Franks in Italy, the provinces of Britain being shared by the Angles, Saxons and Jutes. Like vultures over their prey, these barbarians often quarrelled with each other, and wars and conquests and changes of government were the result. Before the sixth century closed, a new people—the Lombards ruled in Italy : two centuries later they were conquered by the Franks, their kingdom ceased to exist, and three centuries after the fall of the Western Empire, a Roman Emperor again arose in the person of Charlemagne. During all this time, if we except an unimportant inroad of the Saxons, Ireland was free from the ravages of foreign invasion. Never subject to Rome, perhaps it was never heard of by those who invaded the Roman Empire nor is there any reason to think that if these barbarians had heard of Ireland, they would have wasted their energies in conquering a remote island, while they had before them the fertile fields of Italy and Gaul. Untroubled by either Frank or Saxon, Ireland was allowed to pursue its destiny in peace,

\* Gibbon, Vol. II., pp. 348, 456, 480, 498. ; Vol. III., pp. 258.

and yet, it is only the truth to say, that from the sixth to the ninth century its record was one of turbulence and blood. A crowd of chieftains, or petty kings, careless of the national welfare, and intent only on preserving the lawless independence of their clans, were for ever contending with each other. A dispute about boundaries, an injury to a clansman, a slight or apparent slight to the chief, perhaps his predatory or plundering instincts to possess what belonged to a weaker neighbour—from such causes war often arose—and when such causes were wanting, vanity or ambition supplied others. In the Brehon Law it is stated that he is no king who has not hostages,\* and these were usually had by war. The more of these hostages a king or chief had, the greater was he acknowledged to be; he regarded their number with as much complacency as the Red Indian regarded the number of scalps that hung at his belt, and Nial is best remembered, not so much for his foreign conquests, as because of the nine hostages he retained in his power. As if these various causes of contention were not sufficiently numerous, there was besides the endless struggles for the position of Ardri. Since the death of Nial, the honor was restricted to his descendants, but his descendants were numerous and ambitious, the principle of primogeniture was not recognised, there were many candidates for the kingly office, and whilst few of these princes were willing to be subjects, fewer still were worthy to be kings. Nor was the Ardri, when chosen, ever free from trouble, and of him it might be said with truth that uneasy was the head which wore the crown. His friends and admirers insisted that he should exact the Boru tribute, and if he showed any reluctance to do so, they taunted him with his impotence † the Leinstermen seldom paid without war: these princes who aspired to be ardris themselves, but whose ambitious hopes were not realised, regarded him with envy, thwarted all his plans, conspired against his life, perhaps had him treacherously assassinated, and there were few of these ardris whose end was not one of violence. Of the twelve kings who ruled in the sixth century all but two were either murdered or fell in battle, and their successors in the two following centuries were pursued with similar misfortune.

If everything which the Bards wrote of these centuries had come down to us our annals would contain much more than

\* *Senchus Mor*, Vol. iv., p. 51.

† If the Book of Leinster is entitled to credit, Adamnan was highly displeased with King Finachta, when he renounced the Boru tribute; but the story is probably the invention of some bard, for a man so saintly and so wise as Adamnan would hardly be guilty of such unpatriotic conduct. (Douglas Hyde · *A Literary History of Ireland*, pp. 236-7.

they do, for they would be filled with exaggeration and fable. But much of what they wrote has perished, we are compelled to confine ourselves to facts and of many of these ardris, all we know is that they reigned, that they fought battles and that they died. The great events that mark their reigns are few, yet there are a few of some importance which cannot and ought not be ignored. In the reign of Lughaid (503), from that small territory called Dalriadia, lying eastward of the river Bann, a colony passed over the sea to Caledonia. They were led by Fergus, Engus and Loarn, the sons of Erc, and were strong enough to effect the conquest of that part of Caledonia from the mouth of the Clyde, north-west along the broken and irregular coast of Argyle.\* The land was not rich, nor was their territory extensive, but, perhaps, by fresh reinforcements from Ireland, they were able to establish and consolidate their power, until, ultimately, at a later age, they extended the limits of their possessions, defeated the Picts, and became masters of all Caledonia. The same year that these colonists left Dalriadia for Caledonia, the Ardri Lughaid died. His two immediate successors were Muirchertach (died 527), and Tuathal (527-44), about neither of whom anything remarkable is known.

The succeeding Ardri was Diarmid, and his reign is marked by events of considerable importance. His birth, and perhaps also his abilities, had marked him out as Tuathal's successor, but that Ardri had other projects in view, and to prevent Diarmid coming to the throne he proclaimed him an outlaw, and set a price on his head. Diarmid lived for many years the life of a fugitive and an outcast, and, at length, took refuge with St. Kieran, who was then founding his monastery at Clonmacnoise. He aided the Saint in putting up his first building, and, whilst driving a post into the earth, took Kieran's hand, and placed it over his own in token of reverence and submission. † This fact is commemorated, and on one of the crosses still standing at Clonmacnoise, there is a representation of Kieran with his hand resting on that of Diarmid. ‡ When he became Ardri, Diarmid was not so submissive or respectful to the monks, but, on the contrary, had serious disputes with them, disputes which brought many ills, both on himself and on his country. In 560, the Feis of Tara was held, and during the usual festivities, a young Connaught prince, who was kept as a hostage at Tara, killed another hostage, whether by accident or design does not appear. ||

\* Reeves' *Adamnan*, pp. 433-8 (additional notes): Reeves gives the date of this migration as 506.

† Healy, p. 262. The Saint in return prophesied that Diarmid would be Ardri.

‡ *Ibid*, p. 267.

|| *Four Masters*, Vol. I., p. 191: Healy, p. 310



For such a heinous offence death was the punishment, and hoping to save his life, the young prince fled to Columba's monastery for sanctuary; but the right of sanctuary was denied, the Ardri was stern and determined to punish, and the young man was violently torn from the shelter of Columba's monastery, and instantly put to death. Another refugee—Hugh Gawrie of Hy-Many, who had killed the king's sergeant, Backlaure—fled to the monastery of Rhodanus of Lorrha.\* But again the right of sanctuary was denied, Hugh was carried to Tara, and when Rhodanus followed and earnestly begged the prisoner's release, he was answered with insults by the king.† Such conduct on the part of the Ardri roused the indignation of the clergy, Rhodanus and other monks went to Tara, cursed Diarmid, and even cursed Tara itself, and it is certain that Diarmid was the last monarch who dwelt there.‡ That ancient palace gradually fell into decay, its halls were silent, its banquets and feasts ceased, and the lament of a modern poet is well-known that the harp of Tara hung silent upon the palace walls, and that on the rare occasions on which its chords were touched it was only to sing of the ruin of Tara.|| In their dispute with the Ardri, Rhodanus and Columba may have been right—the privilege of sanctuary was an important one and ought not lightly be resigned—and if they had chastised Diarmid himself with the spiritual weapons at their command, posterity would not have much reason to complain. But in covering Tara with their maledictions, they did what was unwise and unpatriotic for it was the residence of the Ardri for ages, it was the centre and symbol of united government, no other place was so respected by the people. After Diarmid, each Ardri dwelt in his own ancestral territory, at Aileach in the north, and at Dunsciath, near Mullingar; Tara, darkened and blighted by the Saint's curses, was deserted, the Ardri's decrees emanating from Aileach and Dunsciath received but scant courtesy; they were neither obeyed nor feared, and the Ardris themselves came to be spoken of as kings with opposition—kings with a doubtful title to the throne.

Other evils also came upon Diarmid. Columba had been paying a visit to his friend, St. Finian of Moville, and this latter

\* *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, at the year 563.

† Petrie, *Antiquities of Tara Hill*, p. 126.

‡ *Annals of Clonmacnoise*. They cursed Tara and prayed that no king or queen should ever after dwell there.

|| In Adamnan's day, Tara was used as the place of a national assembly, as it was sometimes, besides, for ecclesiastical assemblies. (Petrie's *Tara Hill*, p. 174.)

monk had in his possession a valuable copy of the Psalter. Desiring a copy for his own use, Columba, secretly, and without asking or obtaining Finian's permission, made a copy of the book. The secret was discovered; Finian was angry, and demanded the copy; Columba refused; the dispute was referred to the Ardri who decided against Columba, on the ground that the copy went with the book, as the calf did with the cow.\* Columba was of the royal race of Tirconnell, he was not yet a saint, but a proud, self-willed man with the warlike instincts of the princes from whom he sprang. He refused to abide by the decision of the Ardri, angrily made his way to the north, roused with his fierce complaints, his relatives and friends, and Tirconnell, assisted by the King of Connaught, made war upon Diarmid. The battle between the contending hosts was fought at Cuildrevne† in the County of Sligo (561), and Diarmid was utterly defeated. The copy of the Psalter, since known as the Cathach, or battle book, was captured and ever afterwards kept in the family of the O'Donnell's. The stormy and troubled life of Diarmid was closed (565), by a violent death. In that year,‡ he was killed by Black Hugh, one of the princes of Dalaraidhe. His successors were Donal and Fergus, who reigned, as joint sovereigns, but their reign lasted only one year. They were succeeded by Eochy and Baedan, also as joint sovereigns; both of these kings were killed, in 568, Ainmire, the next Ardri, was killed, a year later, and his successor, a year later still.

The next Ardri was Aedh, son of Ainmire, and his reign, beginning about 570, is noted for its length, nearly 30 years, and also for the fact that during that time was held (590) the Convention of Drumcat.|| The place at which this assembly met is situated in the county of Londonderry, not far from the town of Newtownlimivady, on the banks of the little river Roe. A long mound, sometimes called the Mullagh, and sometimes Daisy Hill, still marks the spot. Called by the Ardri himself, the assembly was the most representative and the most numerously attended that had met in Ireland, since the Assemblies at Tara ceased to be held. Accommodated in tents, which covered the summit and sides of the hill, there were gathered together from all quarters of Ireland, kings, princes, bards.

\* Healy, p. 250.

† Columba *prayed* for his own friends while the battle raged. (Adamnan, p. 250.)

‡ This is the date given by Tighernach (*Four Masters*, Vol. I., p. 200, note.)

|| This O'Donovan believes to be the true date, though the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* give the date to be 587, and the *Annals of Ulster* to be 576.

bishops, abbots and various members of the clergy ; while from the Dalriadan colony of Caledonia came king Aidan, accompanied by a still more celebrated man, Columba, now Abbot of Iona. The sittings of the Convention were protracted but were not without fruit. The Ardri, it appears, had received tribute from the princes of Dalriadia in Ireland, and also from the Caledonia colony of the Dalriadians. But Aidan, king of the latter, refused to continue paying such tribute, alleging that he was an independent king, and not a mere tributary chief.\* The Ardri, rejected these pretensions and menaced Aidan, whom he regarded as a rebellious vassal. To Columba, especially, belongs the merit of having settled this dispute. Aidan had in many ways befriended him and his monastery at Iona ; he was his kinsman and neighbour ; Columba had anointed him as king.† The Abbot knew the difficulties with which he was surrounded in his Caledonian possessions ; that he was encompassed by powerful enemies—the Northern and Southern Picts, and that against these enemies he could never make headway, if kept in a position of dependence and tutelage, hampered by a yearly tribute to the Irish king. It would be a repetition of the Boru tribute with all its attendant evils. His arguments were convincing, his influence with the Convention was great and his views prevailed. Aidan was declared independent and he and his people on their side undertook to be always the allies and friends, as they were already the relatives of the Irish monarch.

The position and privileges of the Bards were also considered, and afforded much matter for discussion. Nor was it except through the great influence of Columba that this question also was satisfactorily settled. In each kingdom, and even in each clan, there was at least one of these bards, granted an official allowance and occupying an official position. Dressed in his white robe, and not unfrequently accompanied by a retinue of musicians, he followed his chief into every battle in which he was engaged. The varying fortunes of the fight gave inspiration to his muse, and as the ranks of battle advanced, or retreated, he poured forth his unpremeditated song. He urged the timid, steadied the hesitating, applauded valour, put cowardice to shame ; and the coward had less fear of the foemen's weapons, than of the biting satire of his bard. In peace he sat as an honored guest in the kingly banquet-hall, where he extolled the merits of his chief, his prowess in war, his fleetness in the chase, his wisdom in council ; female beauty and female virtue

\* Reeves' *Adamnan*, p. 92, note.

† *Ibid.*, pp: 198-9. One of the first instances on record where a king was anointed, and all the more remarkable, because the anointing ecclesiastic was not a bishop, but only an abbot.



received their meed of praise at his hands ; and when he spoke of battles, it was to chronicle in song the heroic deeds of his kinsmen, and to pay a tribute to the memory of the fallen brave.\* His recompense was given with no niggard hand. The Chief Bards ranked as high as princes, and in all public assemblies their place was next to that of the king. Large landed estates were given them, and many of them had an income which might well support the dignity of a prince. Several colleges were established where these bards were trained, where history and poetry were taught ; these colleges were filled with students and, before the close of the sixth century, the Bards had become so numerous and wealthy that one-third of the land of Ireland was in their hands. But as toleration begets security, privilege begets insolence ; and these Bards, loaded with honours and with wealth, were still unsatisfied. Numbers of them, having no official position, wandered over the country and wasted their lives in idleness and dissipation. At the richer and better class of homes, they demanded hospitality as a right, and according to the character of the reception they got, so was their praise or blame. Whoever received them well, they covered with fulsome adulation, glossed over vices where they existed, and found virtue and merit where there were none. But whoever received them coldly, or refused to receive them at all, they held up to public scorn and contempt. Such an order of men, idle, useless, and lazy, had become a public nuisance and a national danger ; there were few they had not offended or disgusted ; and the cry in Ireland was universal that the Bardic Order should be abolished.† Columba saved them from extinction.‡ He admitted there were grave abuses, but he pleaded for reform rather than for extinction. The bards were historians, as well as poets, and he asked : If there were no bards, who would write the history of the country, who would trace the pedigrees of its princes, who would sing the praises of its heroes ? Columba himself was a poet, || a fact which quickened his sympathy with the threatened order. The Convention hearkened to his appeal, the Bards were saved, but their number was diminished. Henceforth only one bard was allowed to each provincial prince, and

\* Walker ; *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards*, pp. 10-17.

† Douglas Hyde ; *Literary History of Ireland*, pp. 488-490.

‡ Though Columba saved the bards and in gratitude received their praises, yet the relations between the bards and the clergy were not of a cordial character. (Reeves' *Adamnan*, p. 80.)

|| Reeves' *Adamnan*, pp. 264 *et seq.* It is in his "Dialogue with Cormac," (p. 267), he declares that

"Death is better in reproachless Erin  
Than perpetual life in Alba."

each lord of a cantred, and this bard was bound to use his talents only for the glory of God, and the honor of his native land. In the Bardic seminaries the number of students was strictly limited; of all these seminaries the Chief Bard of the Ardri was president, and it was he who nominated the bards for the service of the various princes and lords.\*

But while these matters were satisfactorily arranged, that fruitful source of discord and strife—the Boru tribute—was left untouched. The tax was still insisted upon by the Ardri; the Leinstermen resisted, under their able chief, Branduff, and a battle was fought at Dunbolg.† (598.) The advantage of numbers was on the side of the Ardri, but the advantage of ability and skill was with the Leinster king; the Ardri's army was routed and himself was among the slain. The last king of the century, as well as the first, thus met a violent death. Nor was the fate of the kings, who reigned in the first years of the seventh century, anything different. The names of these kings and the order in which they reigned is known—Aedh Alan and Coleman, as joint sovereigns, Aedh Uairidhnach Maelcovy and Sweeny. Their reigns fill up the space from the battle of Dunbolg to the accession of Donal (627):‡ and of each it can be said, that his reign was uneventful, his life unmarked by any great incident, his death—except that of Aedh Uairidhnach—brought about by violence.

The personal talents of Donal, and at least one notable event in his reign, have distinguished the period in which he lived, and mark that period out from the time which immediately preceded and followed it. The son of Aedh, the son of Ainmire, both of whom were Ardris, Donal was but a child, when the Convention of Drumcat was held, and was brought there by his nurses, so that he might receive St. Columba's blessing. The saint blessed him and predicted that he would survive all his brothers, that he would be a famous king, that he would be victorious against all his enemies, and that he would die in his own house and in his own bed peaceably, and surrounded by his friends.|| And the prophecy in its entirety was fulfilled,

\* Keating, pp. 379–80. At Drumcat the Bards were exempted from taxes and their houses were invested with the privilege of sanctuary. *Vid.* also Walker's *Bards*, pp. 53–54.

† Dunbolg is situated near Hollywood in the County of Wicklow. (*Four Masters*, Vol. I., pp. 218–19.)

‡ *Four Masters*, 598, Aedh Slan and Coleman, 604, Aedh Uairidhnach, 612, Maelcovy; 615, Sweeny.

|| Reeves' *Adannan*, p. 37. Donal's eldest brother Conal died in 604, his second brother, Cumasach, was slain at Dunbolg, Maelcovy, the third brother, was slain (615) at the battle of Sliabh Truim, in Co. Tyrone.

He became Ardri in 627, and was soon involved in war with an Ulster prince named Congal. This prince had made war—apparently an unjust war—on the preceding Ardri, Sweeny, and in a battle fought between them, Sweeny was slain. Such conduct Donal was determined to punish; he regarded Congal as an unjust aggressor, who had acted as a rebellious subject. He made war upon him, defeated him at the battle of Dun-Ceithern in Derry (628), and drove him from his possessions in Ulster.\* The exiled prince sought refuge among the Saxons, and did not abandon the hope of regaining his lost dominions, as well as being revenged upon the Ardri. After spending nine years in exile, he returned to Ulster, bringing with him a mercenary army gathered together from many quarters, Saxons, Scots, Britons and Picts; and these, joined to his own followers at home, made up a numerous army.† But the Ardri was not dismayed. He was an active and able prince, and rapidly gathered an army together, and assisted by the forces of Munster, Leinster and Connaught, he marched northwards.‡ He did not wish to fight Congal, for he loved him, he was his foster father, and he sorrowfully declared that his fight with him was that of a son and a father.|| But rebellion should be put down, and it was necessary that Congal and his mercenaries should be crushed. The opposing forces met at Moyrath (637), a place now marked by the little town of Moira, in Down. Not since the battle of Dunbolg was there so fiercely contested a fight, in which the most stubborn valour was displayed, and in which success was long doubtful. The single combat between Congal, on one side, and a chieftain named Conal on the other side, is compared in a bardic tale of the twelfth century to that between Hector and Antæus.\*\* The soldiers gathered round their chiefs, and were animated by their example, and for six days the battle raged. The victory, though long delayed, was decisive. Congal was slain; of his Ulster troops only 600 were left, and his allies from across the sea were almost exterminated.†† For the remainder of his life, Donal's reign was peaceable, disturbed neither by native or foreigner; and he died (644), as St. Columba had foretold, on his bed, and surrounded by his friends. And special

\* *Four Masters.*

† *Adamnan* (Reeves), pp. 200–201.

‡ *Battle of Moyrath* (Edited by O'Donovan), Irish Archæological Society, p. 215.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 135.

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 259.

†† If the Bardic Tale (*Battle of Moyrath*), could be taken as true, only one foreigner—Dubdhiadh—a Druid, survived, and he swam across to Scotland, with a dead hero tied to his leg (p. 321), a fiction not unworthy of a Bard.



stress has been laid on this fact,\* so rare was it for an Irish king to die a peaceful death in these days of violence and strife.

For forty years after the death of Donal, important events are few. There was the usual quarrelling among the candidates for the position of Ardri, but scarcely anything else, except that the country was visited by a plague † (660), the ravages of which were considerable. Almost in every house there was death, among those who were carried off being Dermott and Blaithmac, who ruled jointly as ardris. In the reign of Finachta, Ireland was for the first time (684) invaded by a Saxon King. The Northumbrian king, Egfrid, apparently, without any provocation, or any design except plunder, sent his general, Berta, and an army across to the east coast of Ireland. The invaders wasted and spoiled the whole country along the coast from Dublin to Drogheda, destroyed and robbed the churches and monasteries, and carried away many of the natives into captivity. Finachta had not the energy of King Donal, or he might have driven out these intruders, but whatever qualities he had, military capacity was not one of them; the resistance he offered was feeble and futile, and Berta and his Northumbrians were able to plunder and destroy as they willed. Bede has condemned with just severity this invasion by the Northumbrian king, laments that he should without cause have attacked an inoffensive nation, who were always friendly to the English and regards his defeat and death the following year, at the hands of the Picts, as the just punishment for this crime. ‡

A century had passed—a century of war and strife, since the national assembly of Drumcat, until again another similar assembly was convened. This time (697), it was at Tara, and is remarkable as being the last Feis of Tara. As at Drumcat the notabilities of the whole land were there, || kings, princes, bishops and abbots, and so also was Columba's successor, Adamnan, ninth abbot of Iona. One law which the assembly made is remarkable, it was a law prohibiting women from taking part in battle. It was afterwards called Adamnan's law, because it was at his suggestion and through his influence it was passed. Such a law had been made at the Convention of Drumcat, but in Ireland abuses are tenacious of existence, the law continued

\* Reeves' *Adamnan*, pp. 37-38.

† *Four Masters*.

‡ Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, Book IV., chap. 26. Bede says that the Irish "prayed long and fervently for vengeance."

|| There were thirty nine ecclesiastics, presided over by the abbot of Armagh; at the head of the laity was Loingsech, the Ardri, who succeeded Finachta, in 695, and reigned until 703. (Reeves' *Adamnan*—Appendix to Preface.)

to be disregarded, and, a century later, it was necessary that it should be re-enacted and re-enforced. On men only, the stern duty of active warfare is imposed, and if women are found upon the battlefield, it is not as combatants to mingle in the fray. To sympathise, to comfort, to console, to ease the stricken limb, to lift up the drooping head, to staunch the bleeding wound, to moisten the parched lips, to cool the aching brow, to whisper into the ear words of consolation and hope, to recall the prayer learned at a mother's knee and lost amid the dissipation of camps, to point with trust to that unknown land on which the soul is about to enter, and on the threshold of which she trembles and fears, and finally, to reverently close the eye when the spirit has winged its flight, it is such acts as these we expect of women, and such that give her dignity amid the roar and the crash of battle. There are times when she may go farther. Her honor, her personal liberty may be imperilled, her faith endangered her country on the point of being enslaved by an alien and hated power. In such circumstances women cannot be blamed if, rising superior to the natural weakness of their sex, they rush to arms and insist on fighting like men. It is easy and natural to sympathise with those women of Germany, who, with dishevelled hair, implored of their own soldiers on the battlefield not to yield to the enemy, that is, not to permit their women to become slaves ; \* and it is natural also to admire those women of Limerick, who, when their city was besieged, fought by the side of their men, and as valiantly as they, and helped to drive the soldiers of King William from out their city, baffled, beaten and dismayed. But it is different when we contemplate the woman who fights for the sake of fight, with the fury of battle in her eye ; and in the pages of the Greek historian there is no class of woman inspires us with more aversion than those Amazons of Scythia, " who shoot with the bow, throw the javelin and ride on horseback, and have never learned the employments of women." † Happily they belong more to mythology than to history. The Irishwomen of Adamnan's day were not Amazons, yet, sometimes their conduct was not dissimilar, and a sight which the Abbot saw in one of his journeys through Meath was as barbarous as could be seen among the most brutal of men. In a battle that was being fought, women were engaged as combatants, on both sides, and Adamnan saw a woman of one side drag along a woman of the other side, with an iron hook sunk in the woman's breast. ‡ To stop such revolting scenes, to recall woman to what became her sex, to restrict her to the

\* Cæsar ; *De Bello Gallico Lib. I.*, chap. 52 :

† Herodotus, Book IV., chap. 114.

‡ Healy, p. 342.

sphere of womanhood, Adamnan's law was passed; and the man whose influence was strong enough to have it enacted and enforced deserved well both of his own age and of after times.

In the reign of Finachta (674-690) that monarch did at least one act which redounded to his honor. At the instance of St. Moling, bishop of Ferns, he renounced for ever, for himself and as far as he could for his successors, the Boru tribute.\* It would be difficult to imagine any arrangement more fruitful of strife, than the infliction upon Leinster of this tribute. It was unjust and offensive to that province, and its exaction was usually resisted by force, that is when Leinster was strong enough to resist. To abolish for ever this unhappy tribute which had worked so many ills and was likely to work more, St. Moling intervened with the Ardri, and happily with success. And the promise which Finachta made he faithfully kept. But his successors did not follow his example; they refused to be bound by his promises, and had neither his wisdom nor his patriotism. The hated tribute was revived, with the result that the reigning Ardri, Fergal, in trying to enforce it, was defeated at Allen in Kildare† (722), by the outraged and indignant Leinstermen, the Ardri himself being among the slain. As a sequel to that battle and its result, Leinster was again attacked (737)‡ by Fergal's son, who was then Ardri, and at Ballyshannon, in Kildare, the Leinstermen were defeated, their army almost exterminated and Leinster left with scarce a man to defend her. Thus were these contests kept up, sometimes suspended but again renewed; and while Leinster and successive Ardris weakened and exhausted each other, a new enemy was about to appear on the scene, against whom, when divided, they could effect but little, but whom, if united, they might have overthrown.

\* Healy, p. 428.

† *Four Masters*. The Ardri had 21,000 men, Leinster only 9,000. The list of the chiefs who fell is given in the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* at 717.

‡ *Ibid.*, at the year 733. The Ardri was Aedh Allen. The place where the battle was fought is "four miles south-west of Kilcullen Bridge."





## CHAPTER VIII.

### *The Danish Invasion.*

The Northmen of the eighth century—Their first arrival in Ireland, places plundered by them—Arrival of Turgesius—His successes and death—Some victories gained by the Irish—Fingalls and Duvgalls—Reign of Flann—No fresh Danish inroads—Native chiefs quarrel—Danes expelled from Dublin, but again return—Danes at Limerick—Miseries of the natives under their rule—Dublin captured by Malachy—Rivalry between Malachy and Brian—Battle of Glenmama—Malachy ceases to be Ardri.

THE coasts of Scandinavia were inhabited, in the eighth century, by a warlike and savage race, who, under the varying names of Northmen and Danes, were long the terror of Western Europe. The Goths, who so often harassed the Roman provinces, and who, in the third century, were the allies and, in the fifth century, the conquerors of Rome, had their original home or the shores of the Baltic\* and from the same coasts the Angles and Saxons issued, in the fifth and sixth centuries,† first to assist and afterwards to conquer the Britons. The similarity of manners and beliefs between these different races indicates that they came from common ancestors, and were all members of the great Teutonic race. But, in the eighth century, they differed much among themselves. The Goths of Italy and Spain, whose morals had been purified by their Christian beliefs and whose manners had become softened by contact with civilization, bore but little resemblance to the savages who fought under the banners of Alaric. Nor was the difference less marked between the Christian Anglo-Saxons, who could already boast of the scholarship of Alcuin and Bede, and their savage kinsmen, who in their incursions spared neither age nor sex, and whose progress through Britain could be marked by heaps of human bones.‡ But the Northmen of the eighth century were still savages, and neither Goth nor Saxon at their worst were more ferocious

\* Gibbon, Vol. I., p. 188. Their homes were in the southern portion of Sweden.

† *Ibid.*, Vol. II., p. 138.

‡ Gibbon, Vol. II., p. 570.

than they. War and piracy were their favourite occupations ; they fought for the sake of fighting, deemed it a duty to revenge the slightest affront offered them,\* considered it meritorious to attack and plunder every nation but their own ; and such was their repugnance to a life of peace that, at home among themselves, they organized reviews and tournaments and sham battles, which sometimes ended in real and bloody warfare.† Whatever was weak or helpless they despised ; and while wealth and birth were respected among them, they recognised, above all, the ascendancy of personal prowess and daring achievement. Their own country was poor, it abounded in forests and mountains, the climate was severe, the hardships of life were many, and as the population increased the prospects of those who remained at home grew less attractive. The cautious, the timid, the peace-loving might prefer a life of settled industry at home, but among the Northmen the spirit of adventure was strong, and the numbers were many, who willingly and even eagerly abandoned the quietness and obscurity of their native fields for the life of the freebooter, for the hope of wealth and fame, and the exhilaration of battle. Such men knew no fear. Like the Saxons they excelled in the use of the battle-axe and the oar. With the sea that raged round their coasts they were familiar, they knew its moods ; they dreaded not its wrath ; they loved to wander over its broad expanse ; and found a fierce delight in wrestling with the tempests and the billows. At first their depredations were confined to the Baltic and its neighbourhood, but their courage advanced with their success, and France and Britain and Scotland and Ireland were successively assailed. As their boats were light and drew but little water, they could voyage from the sea far up the creeks and rivers, and from the shelter of the river banks suddenly swoop down upon the inhabitants and, collecting all that could be plundered, rapidly make their way back to the sea.‡ Those who resisted they killed, or if they allowed any to survive, it was to take them away into slavery, making them till the earth ; for these Vikings disdained the labours of agriculture, as fit only for slaves and beneath the dignity of warriors and freemen. Among their deities, Odin ||

\* Mallet's *Northern Antiquities* (Bohn's Ed.), p. 126.

† *Ibid.*, p. 195.

‡ Gibbon, Vol. II., p. 139.

|| Mallet, pp. 79-83. Among the Scandinavians there were two who bore the name of Odin, and they are sometimes confounded, one with the other. Odin, the supreme deity, whose position in Scandinavian mythology is akin to Jupiter on Olympus, and Odin, a warrior and lawgiver, who fought against Pompey, and who in time seems to have been treated with divine honours.

who dwelt in Valhalla, was the chief, but Thor, the God of War, who slew all his enemies with his mighty hammer, received much of their veneration. These gods rewarded most of all bravery in war, and hence the Northman entered into battle with a light heart. If he survived, his valour was rewarded with wealth and glory and slaves to minister to his wants; the Skalds sung his praises,\* and the youth were directed to follow in his footsteps; if he fell, he was taken at once by Odin into Valhalla, where only warriors were worthy to go, and where his time was spent in feasting and drinking with the gods.†

The Irish distinguished these Northmen into Fingals, or white strangers, and Duvgalls, or black strangers, the former being the fair-haired inhabitants of Norway, whilst the complexion of the Duvgalls, or natives of Denmark, was of a darker tinge. But the names Northmen and Danes are indefinitely applied. Those who went from Denmark were impelled by the same motives and had the same objects in view as those who went from Norway. They were animated by the same hopes and fears and their beliefs were similar. Nor were the Irish able, at all times, clearly to distinguish between the Norsemen and the Danes, for though they sometimes fought among themselves, they were not infrequently enrolled under the same Viking's banners.

It was towards the close of the eighth century that Ireland was first ravaged by these Northern pirates. They had landed at Wessex (787) coming in only three ships‡ and were taken by the King's officers at Dorchester for merchants. They had ravaged Lindisfarne and Northumbria (793), plundered Lambay Island, near Dublin (795),|| and Innispatrick near Skerries (798) taking away the shrine of Saint Dochona. In 806 they attacked Iona, overcame the monks, who could offer but a feeble resistance, burned the monastic buildings, carried away the gold and silver vessels of the church, and in addition to the smoking ruins of the venerable monastery, they left the slaughtered remains of sixty-eight monks to attest the fury of their assault.\*\* In the following year they again visited the Irish coasts, ravaged Innishmurry, off the coast of Sligo, and for the first time penetrated some distance inland, and laid much of Roscommon desolate. The islands off the coast of Kerry were plundered (811) and,

\* Mallet, p. 235.

† *Ibid.*, p. 105. The Scandinavian conception of supreme bliss either here or in a future state was to fight and to eat and drink to excess.

‡ Ethhelwerd's *Chronicle* (*Six Old English Chronicle.*)

|| *Four Masters.*

\*\* *Ibid.*, Vol. I., p. 411; only 64 of the monks survived this attack (Lanigan, Vol. III., p. 241.)



in the following year, the district of Burrishoole, in Mayo, was ravaged and numbers of its people slain.\* The whole line of coast from Wexford to Cork and Kerry was swept with desolation (822). Bergery Island in Wexford Harbour, Cape Clear Island, Cork and Cloyne being among the places that suffered most. On the desolate island of Skellig, off the coast of Kerry, neither gold nor silver could be found to gratify their rapacity and greed. An anchoret was the only inhabitant of the island; he fasted and prayed and kept lonely vigil on that desolate rock, while the waves thundered at its base. The northern pirates landed, captured the anchoret, and allowed him to die of starvation on their hands.† The trembling natives along the coast saw with dismay their lands laid desolate, their homes in ruin, their cattle and sheep carried off, their churches burned, their sacred vessels profaned by impious hands, their monks and priests massacred their sons led away into slavery, their daughters to slavery and dishonour. It were little wonder if they thought that the end of all things was at hand. Bangor was sacked (824), nine hundred of its monks murdered, and St. Comgall's shrine carried away. Dundalk and Moville and the whole district of Ossory were laid waste the same year, Lusk monastery was ravaged and destroyed (826),‡ Donaghmoyne, in Monaghan, (829)|| and neither the sanctity nor learning of St. Adamnan saved his remains from outrage, for his shrine also was carried away. Armagh, Louth, and most of Ulster were plundered (830), Armagh being plundered three times in the course of one month. A permanent colony was established at Limerick, and from this central stronghold the surrounding territories of Munster were assailed, whilst the plunder of Lismore, in the south, and Maghera in the north, in the same year, attests the impartiality and extent of their depredations. Hampered by the divisions among their chiefs, destitute of defensive organisation, ignorant of the time and place of attack and generally taken unaware, the Irish could offer but an ineffective resistance. Yet the foreigners were sometimes checked and even defeated. The Munstermen defeated them (811) off the coast of Kerry; at Hy Kinsella they were again defeated (827), and a combination of Munster chiefs all but destroyed the Danes of Limerick at Shanagolden.\*\*

For more than thirty years these Northmen had harassed the Irish coasts. Their attacks were many, but so far were irregular and intermittent, made by different leaders, without

\* *Four Masters.*

† *Wars of the Gael and Gall*—Introduction, p. 38.

‡ *Four Masters.* Lanigan, Vol. III., pp. 270-71.

|| *Annals of Clonmacnoise.*

\*\* *Four Masters.*

unity of purpose or design and as yet, though there was much plunder, there was, except at Limerick, no attempt made at permanent settlement. But in 832, Turgesius,\* the most renowned of their Vikings, appeared. Some obscurity surrounds his origin and exploits, and it has been sought to identify him with Regnar Lodbrog, who fought and fell in Northumbria. There are undoubtedly points of resemblance, if not of identification. They lived during the same years, they were famous and successful Vikings, each was put to death by his Christian foes ; Turgesius had a lord deputy named Gormundus, or Gormo, and Scandinavian history records that the dominions acquired by the sword of Regnar were for a time ruled by a chieftain of that name. The name Turgesius is nothing more than Thorgils latinised, which means servant of Thor, the War God of the North, a name which might fittingly be applied to Regnar.† If the identity of these two chiefs be established then we must accept the legend that Regnar died in Ireland and discard that which declares that he was defeated and taken prisoner by King Ella of Northumberland and that he was flung into a dungeon filled with vipers and venomous serpents, who stung him to death. And in his death-song he joyfully accepted his fate and smiled with pleasure when he reflected that a place was reserved for him in the halls of Odin, and that soon seated there at the great banquet table he should dring flowing draughts of beer from cups of horn.‡ Whatever may be thought of Regnar Lodbrog there is no doubt that Turgesius is a historical personage ; there is no doubt as to his arrival in Ireland ; and the time of his coming and the time of his death are matters of certainty. Equally ferocious as the other Norse leaders who preceded him, he entertained greater designs, and had greater capacity for command. Tired perhaps of the cheerless climate and barren soil of Norway he desired a land with a more genial climate and more fertile fields. Like the other Vikings he was ever ready for plunder, but plunder was not his only ambition, and apparently he meditated the permanent conquest of Ireland. Nor were the times unpropitious for his designs. The northern half of Ireland was for ages the patrimony of the sons of Nial, and from the kings of Meath, Tirconnell and Tirowen the Ardris were alternately drawn. This arrangement was received with disfavour by the kings of Cashel ; their homage to the Ardris was given with reluctance, and sometimes they claimed to be Ardris themselves. Fedlimy, one of the ablest and most ambitious of the

\* *Wars of the Gael and Gall*, chap. 9, and introduction, p. 43:

† Halliday ; *Scandinavian Kingdom of Dublin*, pp. 28 to 32.

‡ Thierry ; *History of the Norman Conquest* (Bogue's European Library), Vol. I, p. 61.

southern princes, now filled the throne of Cashel. Too great to be a subject, unwilling to acknowledge a superior, or even an equal, he could see no reason why a king of Cashel should not also be King of Ireland. If he was, as is sometimes said, a bishop,\* as well as king, his virtues were not those which befit the episcopacy. He was careful to make his religion subservient to his ambition, and had little scruple as to the means he employed in the attainment of his ends. Three times in quick succession he plundered Clonmacnoise, and on one of these occasions (833) he spoiled and pillaged up to the church doors† and “butchered the monks like sheep.” The monasteries of Durrow and Kildare he also plundered, and from the fears and impotence of Foranen, the Primate of Armagh, then an exile at Kildare,‡ he extracted submission and homage. He overran Meath and Bregia (839), and then rested at Tara, in the ruined palace of the ancient kings. Sometimes he is counted among the ardris, although he was never universally recognised. Concurrently with these events, disputes arose between rival claimants for the See of Armagh; the native princes took sides and these contests were no less bitter than those between Fedlimy and his antagonists.||

But while the native princes were thus divided, the whole forces of the Northmen, latterly much augmented, ranged themselves under the able leadership of Turgesius. In their ships some sailed up the Shannon and cast anchor at Lough Ree, some remained at Limerick, some in Carlingford Bay, some at Dundalk, some at Lough Neagh; and while sixty ships were on the Boyne, sixty others were on the Liffey.\*\* From these vessels they sallied forth and harassed the surrounding country. They plundered Clondalkin (833), Glendalough and Slane and the churches of Ormond (834), all Connaught (835), the Kingdom of Meath and the churches of Lough Erne and Inniscaltra (836). Dublin was captured in the same year. Ulster was harassed and Armagh plundered (838), and Clonmacnoise and Clonfert and Lorrha and Tirdaglass were burned (841).

The monasteries everywhere were the first objects of attack. Here were the gold and silver vessels used in the service of the church: here were the shrines of the saints, and here also was consigned for safe-keeping the wealth of many, knowing that the monasteries were respected by the most lawless of the Irish, even in these lawless days. This wealth attracted the Northmen, for their desire of gain was insatiable. Added to

\* *Wars of Gael and Gall*; Todd's Introduction, p. 45.

† Healy, p. 275.

‡ *Four Masters*.

|| *Gael and Gall*—Introduction, pp. 46–7. *Four Masters* at 851.

\* \* *Four Masters*.



this was their fierce heathen fanaticism. They remembered with bitterness all that their religion had suffered at the hands of Charlemagne—how the Saxon followers of Odin had been driven from their homes or murdered, and how all this had been done in the name of Christianity.\* The time for revenge had come. In dishonoring Christ and his Church, they felt they were honoring their pagan gods, and in the name of Odin they massacred the priests and monks, desecrated the churches, and laid so many monasteries in ruins. Turgesius had the Primate of Armagh turned out of his See, and, in imitation, or perhaps in mockery, became himself chief of the priests of Odin, at Armagh; and his wife gave audience seated on the high altar of Clonmacnoise.† Verily, it seemed that the abomination of desolation had entered the holy places, and that, in Ireland at least, the vision of the prophet had been realised.

Keating‡ gives a detailed account of the miseries suffered by the Irish during the domination of Turgesius, and if all of it be true, the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* do not exaggerate when they compare their condition to that of the Christians under the Turks.¶ Every cantred had its Danish ruler, every village its Danish sergeant, in every house a Danish soldier was billeted who acted in that house as absolute master. If the family had money it was taken, if they had good clothes they were seized and worn by the Danish soldier if they had fowl they were eaten by him, if they had but one cow he used its milk, and he heeded neither the wants of the sick, nor the cries of the little children. If the family had arms they were seized, if they had books they were torn or burned, and they were not allowed to entertain others or to be entertained themselves.\*\* A yearly tribute of an ounce of gold was paid by each house, and if the head of the family failed to pay, his nose was cut off, whence the tax was called the nosegelt. This has been explained by saying that each person had to pay taxes—that counting noses and counting numbers were the same,†† but even such savagery as cutting off people's noses might be expected from the Danes if their record in other lands be remembered. To this intolerable oppression, resistance was offered by the natives and sometimes with success. The Kinnellconnell defeated them at Ballyshannon ‡‡ (836), the Dalcassians at Lough Derg, but the progress

\* Halliday, pp. 6, 7, 8.

† *Wars of the Gael and Gall*; Introduction, pp. 48–9.

‡ p. 426

¶ p. 134. He declares that "the great Tamerlane, called the Scourge of God, could not be compared to them for cruelty."

\*\* Keating, p. 426.

†† *Wars of the Gael and Gall*, Introduction, p. 103, note 3.

‡‡ *Ibid.*, chap. 21 and 22, p. 21.

of Turgesius was steady and persistent, and, in 845, the northern portion of the country, as well as Meath and Connaught, lay helpless at his feet. A little more and the whole country would be conquered, but, in 845, his career of conquest ended, for in that year he was defeated by Malachy, King of Meath, taken prisoner and put to death. It is said he was drowned at Lough Ennell, near Mullingar. Keating's account of how he was captured is not without interest. Turgesius had built a palace near the residence of Maelsachlin, King of Meath, and sometimes visited him : and, on one of these occasions, he saw and became enamoured of Maelsachlin's daughter, whose appearance and manner were equally attractive. As he was already married he could not demand her in marriage, nor did he desire to pay her that honor, but merely wished to have her as one of his mistresses. The lady's father knew it would be dangerous to refuse, and agreed, with apparent readiness and goodwill, but stipulated that his daughter should be sent privately to the Danish palace, so as to save appearances and lest the lady's character might suffer. He even promised that he would send with her fifteen other beautiful maidens whom Turgesius might also keep. At the appointed time the lady and her attendants arrived, and were received by Turgesius and fifteen of his ministers and favourites, and an entertainment was prepared. But the attendants sent with the princess, instead of being young women, were all young men of handsome appearance, disguised as females and wearing arms under their female attire. Instead of allowing their young mistress to be outraged by a hated pagan, at a given signal, they rushed upon him, slew all his favourites, and carried himself away into captivity.\*

The death of Turgesius revived the drooping spirits of the natives, and when Malachy, or Maelsachlin, became Ardri (846) he vigorously attacked the invaders and was ably seconded by some of the provincial chiefs. The Danes were defeated in Westmeath (848), losing 700 in battle, in Tipperary they lost 240, at Balrothery (850), 200, at Rathallen, near Duleek, 300 ; they were also defeated at Rathcommair in Meath by Malachy.† They were much weakened and discouraged by their losses and abandoned several of their conquests. These various battles were fought principally with the Fingalls or Norwegians ; but a large fleet of the Duvgalls arrived in Dublin (853). Instead of joining with the Fingalls for the complete subjugation of Ireland, the two nations quarrelled, and a desperate naval battle was fought at Carlingford Bay, which lasted for three days

\* Keating, pp. 428-32.

† *Gael and Gall*, chap. 22: *Four Masters*:

and ended in the complete overthrow of the Fingalls. A few years previously the Northmen had built a fortress at Athcliath or Dublin. The conquerors at Carlingford Bay, attracted by the advantageous position, took possession of the fortress, and established the Kingdom of Dublin, with Olaf the White as their King.\* To the Irish the change from Fingalls to Dubhgalls was merely one of name, for both were equally ferocious and equally greedy of plunder. Olaf soon issued from Dublin and plundered Leinster and Munster, and they left nothing from Limerick to Cork that they did not ravage. They were not, however, so constantly successful as Turgesius and Aedh (863-79), the Ardri, who succeeded Malachy, inflicted upon them two serious defeats at Lough Foyle (867) and at Kilmore, near Drogheda (869), besides the battle of Kiladerry in Dublin (866).†

During the whole reign of Flan (879-915) there were no further arrivals of Northmen. In Dublin and along the coast the Danes were in permanent occupation, and were engaged for the most part in commerce, but for fresh settlers the inducements to come were few. These Northmen desired the glory of victory and the wealth that is obtained by successful war. Had they come in strong force, and fought under a single leader such as Turgesius, they would, no doubt, have conquered the whole country, but coming at different times and under different leaders the resistance offered them was more effective, and the battles fought at Lough Foyle and Drogheda and elsewhere warned them that other contests also might end in defeat. Nor could victory itself bring them the wealth that they desired. The vessels of gold and silver were long since taken from the churches, the shrines of the saints were broken open, the monasteries were but sightless ruins, the inhabitants had been so often plundered that nothing remained to them but poverty and desolation, and from these possessions wealth could not be extracted. For other reasons, too, no fresh bands of Northmen appeared during this period. In the closing years of the ninth century, Harold Harfagher, or the fair-haired, became supreme King of Norway.‡ Originally ruling but portion of that country, he determined to extend his sway and consolidate the various small states—weak, lawless and turbulent—into one powerful kingdom. To vanquish these warlike Vikings was not an easy task, but by patience and perseverance and superior military skill he prevailed. The defeated chiefs fought as long as it was possible, and then sullenly and reluctantly submitted. But old habits are not easily laid aside; they could not reconcile

\* Halliday, p. 23.

† *Four Masters*.

‡ Thierry; Vol. I., p. 90.



themselves to a life of law and settled government ; they loved war and piracy, and against the new king and his government they often rebelled. Driven into exile they founded settlements in the islands of the North Sea, fitted up expeditions, attacked passing vessels, and harassed the coasts of Norway itself, inflicting much damage on the inhabitants. Harold determined to chastise them ; with his fleet he pursued them even to the Orkneys and the Hebrides ; and many a bold Viking, who might look forward to the wealth and luxury of a more southern land, had his fleet scattered, his vessels sunk, and himself sent prematurely to Valhalla, to be entertained with Odin and his gods. Those who escaped, or did not incur the wrath of Harold turned their thoughts to the coasts of France, where tempting prospects of plunder and conquest awaited them. The grandsons of Charlemagne shared between them the splendid inheritance of his Empire, but they did not inherit his genius to rule, or defend what they possessed ; and while they were quarrelling among themselves, one of the greatest of the Norse Vikings, Rollo, descended upon the French coasts, sailed up the Seine, captured Rouen, laid siege to Paris, and repeatedly plundered the surrounding territory. Prompted by policy and fear, Charles the Simple made peace with Rollo, gave him the Duchy of Normandy and his daughter in marriage, and thus changed a fierce antagonist into the greatest bulwark of his throne.\* Others of these Northmen plundered Brittany and even Italy ; and in England they were firmly planted in Mercia, East Anglia and Northumbria.

It might have been thought that this period of repose from Danish invasion would have been used by the Irish to repair the ravages of war, and to organise their forces against future attack. But the time was spent otherwise. The thoughts of each clan were centred in itself. A neighbouring clan it regarded with jealousy, viewed its increasing power with alarm, its influence with envy, its wealth with cupidity and its misfortunes without regret. A century of Danish incursions had not yet taught these clansmen the advantages of combination, nor the evils of dissension, nor the necessity of unity. The Danes were aliens in race and creed, they had suffered untold miseries at their hands, they felt they could have no security until the Danes were beaten. Being Irish, it is unnecessary to say that they were brave and did not shrink from fighting, but they fought as men of Meath, or Tirowen, men of Desmond or Thomond. They did not realise that they were all men of Erin and had a common inheritance to defend. It was local interests alone they regarded, local jealousies that actuated them, and when they

\* Thierry, Vol. I., pp. 94-7:

no longer had swarms of Northmen to combat, they turned their arms against each other ; and instead of the period (879-915) being one of peace and preparation, it was a period of disastrous internal discord. Because the title of the Ardri was not fully and freely recognised in Munster, in revenge, he made war upon that province and plundered it from Kildare to Cork ; Tirowen and Tirconnell he treated similarly.\* The Kinnell Owen and the rest of Ulster were at war (892)† ; as if weary of peace the Ardri overran Connaught (895) and a little later (898) the Connaughtmen were at war with Meath,‡ and Ossory was attacked by the Deisi. Again, on some pretext, the Ardri and the King of Leinster, in alliance, invaded Munster (906),|| and plundered it from Gowran to Limerick. The reigning King of Cashel was Cormac, who was also a bishop. Collecting his forces, he attacked the Ardri and his ally, and at Moylena inflicted upon them well-merited defeat, and the same year he defeated the forces of Meath and Connaught by whom he had been assailed. Satisfied at having repelled all his assailants, he looked forward to a long period of peace, for his ambition was that of the scholar\*\* rather than the warrior. But his chief adviser was Flaherty, abbot of Scatterry Island, to whom the seclusion of a monastery was less agreeable than the excitement of the camp and the battlefield ; and his advice to Cormac was to demand tribute of Leinster, and, following in the footsteps of Fedlimy, to claim that he was Ardri. With a large army he entered Leinster, and at Ballaghmoon, near Carlow, he was met by the combined forces of the Ardri and the Kings of Leinster and Connaught. Munster was defeated with the loss of 6000 men, Cormac himself being among the slain.

During these years of internal discord, the Danish colonies at Dublin, Waterford, and Limerick were not idle. They were engaged principally in commerce, but old habits are not easily laid aside, the traditionary instinct of the Dane was to plunder, and beneath the merchant's garb the pirate could be discerned. Taking advantage of native divisions, they sometimes sallied forth from their strongholds and committed their usual depredations. In native disputes their aid was often sought, for with the Irish chiefs the passion of revenge had consumed all other passions, and to defeat their own countrymen they welcomed the aid of the pagan and the pirate. The son of Ólaf the White, King

\* *Four Masters*.

† *Ibid.*, p. 543, note.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 553.

|| *Annals of Ulster* : the *Four Masters* give the date 902.

\*\* He was author of Cormac's Glossary, *vid. Four Masters*, Vol. II., p. 569—note.

of Dublin, by name Thorsten the Red, had married a granddaughter of Carroll, King of Ossory,\* and when Olaf, with his friend and ally Ivar, the son of Regnar Lodbrog, were engaged in conquering East Anglia and Northumbria (866-7) and plundering Scotland (870)† Carroll was put in possession of Dublin, to hold it for the Danes and to defend it against native assaults. Olaf returned to Ireland from Scotland (870), bringing with him great booty, but the following year he was slain in battle, and a year later Ivar died.‡ Ivar's brother—Halfdene—assuming command continued his wars in Northumbria and Mercia, and was able, in addition, to plunder the Picts and Britons of Strathclyde; nor was it until 876 that he resolved to return to Ireland, and claim the kingdom which the good sword of Olaf had won. But the old quarrels between the Fingalls and Duvalls were revived; the Fingalls, resenting the rule of Halfdene, revolted, and in a naval battle at Strangford Lough, in which the White Strangers and the Black Strangers contended for supremacy, Halfdene was slain. || This series of fatalities among the Danish leaders, added to the necessity of guarding their possessions in England, left Dublin almost forgotten—until Carroll, who was merely the ally and representative of the Danish kings, became King of Dublin himself,\*\* a position he held till his death (885), when Sitric, the son of Ivar, came to Dublin and became king. But Carroll, when he reigned, was King of Dublin by favour of the Danes, he was their ally and friend, he defended Dublin by their arms and with the same readiness as themselves, he allowed them to plunder the Irish, and even led them to plunder; and under Sitric the war and plunder were continued. The Danes plundered Kildare †† (885), defeated the Ardri ‡‡ (887), burned Glendalough ||| (889), Kildare \*\*\* (890), Armagh ††† (894), and allying themselves with the Deisi (893) they overran Ossory. These depredations did not pass unavenged. The Limerick Danes were defeated (887), and again four years later; in Wexford, Waterford and Connaught the Danes were also defeated; ††† Olaf of Dublin was beaten (895), and 800 of his army slain; ||||

\* *Wars of the Gael and Gall*, p. 264. Appendix D.

† Halliday, pp. 36-38.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

|| *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 45.

†† *Four Masters*, 883. *Annals of Ulster*, 885.

‡‡ *Ibid.*, at year 885.

||| *Ibid.*, 886.

\*\*\* *Ibid.*, 887.

††† *Ibid.*, 893.

††† *Ibid.*, at 888.

|||| *Ibid.*, at 891.



but the most important victory was the capture of Dublin\* (901) by the Leinstermen. The Danes were expelled from the city, and for the remainder of Flan's reign, the most valued possession of the Irish Danes was in native hands.

In the same year that Nial Glunduff became Ardri (915), fresh swarms of Northmen appeared. Regnal landed at Waterford and joined those who had arrived there in 912, and under his leadership Munster was ravaged. The Ardri with his army marched south, and encountered the Danes at a place called Tober Glethrach (915), the battle being indecisive. In the following year, Sitric landed at Dublin, captured the city, and defeated the Leinstermen at Cen Fuat, and then plundered Kildare.† During his absence in England, the Ardri attempted the capture of the city and appears to have been quite confident of success. But his confidence was misplaced, the sons of Sitric and Reginald, not content with acting on the defensive, boldly issued from the walls, met and defeated the Ardri, Nial, at Kilmashoge near Rathfarnham. The Ardri himself was killed, so also were several princes, and such was the loss sustained that the bards sang of that day "The destructive morn of Athcliath"‡ Armagh was plundered (921), Dublin and Waterford were unassailable Danish strongholds, but it was at Limerick that Danish power was most difficult to be borne.

The Danish leader was Tomar, whose character and exploits recall the memory of Turgesius. From Limerick he despatched a fleet up the Shannon, plundered Clonmacnoise and the religious establishments at Lough Ree; and along the Shannon the inhabitants were ground down with every form of oppression. Their condition is described by Macliag in his *Wars of the Gael and Gall*. || "They killed the kings and the chieftains, the heirs to the crown and the royal princes of Erin. They killed the brave and the valiant and the stout knights, champions and soldiers and young lords and the greater part of the heroes and warriors of the entire Gael; and they brought them under tribute and servitude; they reduced them to bondage and slavery. Many were the blooming women and comely maidens and blue-eyed young women and well brought up youths and valiant champions they carried into bondage over the broad, green sea. Alas, many and frequent were the bright and brilliant eyes that were suffused with tears and dimmed with grief and despair at the separation of son from father and daughter from mother

\* *Wars of Gael and Gall*; Todd's Introduction, p. 82. *Four Masters*, 897.

† Halliday, p. 56.

‡ Halliday, pp. 58-9.

|| Chapter 36, p. 43.

and brother from brother, and relatives from their race and tribe." Yet these Danes were sometimes defeated, and from out the gloom of such widespread disaster one heroic figure appeared, whose example must have had an inspiring effect on his country men. This was Muirchertach, son of Nial Glunduff. His father had fallen in battle with the Danes—the battle of Kilmashoge—and he seems to have sworn that his father's death would be avenged. With his own forces of Tirowen he fought the Danes for twenty years, inflicting on them many defeats, and died (943), falling at the battle of Ardee, in which the Danes, under Blacar, were victors.\* Muirchertach was heir to the Ardri's throne and, to ensure recognition of his rights, he had made a circuit of Ireland, taking hostages as he went along.† His journey was made in winter, and to protect his troops from the cold he had them clothed in leather coats, whence he has been called Muirchertach of the Leather Coats. The new Ardri, Congalach, defeated the Danes (944)‡ at Dublin, and even carried away most of the inhabitants into captivity, and a few years later (948),|| he also defeated them with heavy loss, their leader Blacar being among the slain. He again defeated them at Muine Breacain (951), but in 956\*\* the Ardri was defeated and slain by the Danes aided by the Leinstermen. During the whole reign of Donal (956-80) only one great battle was fought—that of Kilmore in Meath, in which the Danes were victorious, but with the accession of Malachy II. greater events were at hand.

Either from policy or conviction, the Dublin Danes had now become Christians and had made alliances in marriage with some of the Irish, but the Christian prohibition not to rob or steal they little understood, or at least little observed. As Christians, they made war as readily and with as little justification as when they were yet pagans, and had as little scruple about sacking a monastery or church, as when they marched under the banners of Odin. Malachy determined to chastise them, and the very year he became Ardri (980) he defeated them at Tara,†† where Regnall, son of Olaf, King of Dublin, was killed. With a heavy heart, as if he foresaw the ruin of his dynasty, Olaf resigned the crown to his son Sitric, and went on a pilgrimage to Iona. In that venerable monastery, so often laid in ruins by his kinsmen, he spent the closing years of his

\* *Four Masters* at 941.

† Halliday, p. 72. It appears among the hostages was the son of Sitric, the Danish King of Dublin.

‡ *Four Masters* at 942.

|| *Ibid*, 946.

\*\* *Ibid*, 954.

†† *Four Masters* at 979.

life, and there also he died,\* consoled by the children of St. Columbas. Malachy followed up his successes at Tara by attacking and capturing the city of Dublin. He allowed the Danes to remain, but compelled them to pay tribute, and to release all their captives amounting to two thousand and including Donal, King of Leinster.† He proclaimed that everyone of the Gael in captivity with the foreigners was free to go to his own territory. Their captivity and the hardships it entailed has been compared to that more famous one of Babylon; in the vigorous language of the *Four Masters* it was "next to the captivity of hell." With singular ingratitude the Leinster King was no sooner free from Danish bonds than he allied himself with the Danes and turned his arms against his deliverer; but Malachy crushed this confederacy and overran Leinster (983).‡ He established his authority in Connaught (985),|| and twice (989 and 996), he suppressed revolts in Dublin and compelled that city to pay him tribute. On the last of these occasions he took away the sword and collar of Tomar, relics much prized by the Danes, and afterwards Malachy wore this golden collar himself.\*\* The panegyrists of Brian Boru, who had already become all-powerful in Munster, and was destined to become more powerful still, do not wish to admit that he was ever defeated by Malachy. But this is to ignore, or to suppress, historic facts.†† Malachy defeated him in Thomond (990), in Connaught (992), and again (996) in Tipperary. Menaced by a new and powerful coalition—the Danes of Dublin and Maelmorra, King of Leinster—these two chiefs, Malachy and Brian, laying aside their personal jealousies, joined against the common enemy, and at the battle of Glenmama (999) they fought side by side.

The saying has been attributed to Alexander the Great that the world cannot be ruled by two suns, nor can it contain two empires of the greatest magnitude, without disturbing the peace of nations |||; and with Malachy and Brian, each supreme in his own province, each without a superior or a rival, it seemed impossible that the peace of Ireland could be secured. Malachy's career was hitherto an unbroken series of triumphs, and Brian, though sometimes repulsed, was usually victorious and never suffered a serious reverse. His power had grown steadily, and,

\* The year of his death is uncertain, and one of the Sagas asserts that he was in Dublin in 994. (Halliday, pp. 79-80.)

† *Gael and Gall*, p. 47.

‡ *Four Masters*.

|| *Ibid.*, 984.

\*\* *Ibid.*, Vol. II., p. 733. Note.

†† *Gael and Gall*; Todd's Introduction, p. 142.

||| *Quintus Curtius*, Lib. IV., Chap. II.



from being merely chief of the Dalcassians, he had become unquestioned monarch of Munster, and the most powerful and ablest ruler that Munster had ever known. Perhaps, for the sake of peace, more probably because of his impotence, Malachy had already, by treaty, recognised Brian as king of the southern half of Ireland, thus partially abdicating and no longer demanding from Leath Moha either tribute or submission. All this did not satisfy Brian; he was ambitious and, having rid himself of a superior, he could no longer tolerate an equal. With Sitric and the Danes and with Maelmorra of Leinster, whom he had lately fought, he made alliances, and, strengthened by these, without warning, and in the teeth of his treaty with Malachy, he entered Meath and set up his headquarters at Tara. Deserted by his kinsmen in the north, Malachy with his own forces of Meath felt unable to make headway against so many enemies and acknowledged Brian as Ardri. Thus did the sceptre pass from the descendants of the great Nial, after an interval of nearly six centuries; and without doubt, Malachy, from whose hands it passed, was one of the greatest of that royal line.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### *The Dalcassian Kings.*

Ireland divided in the second century between Conn of the Hundred Battles and Owen More into Leath Cuin, or the Northern half of Ireland, and Leath Mogha, or the Southern half—Leath Mogha subdivided by Oliol Olum between his two sons, Eoghan and Cormac Cas, the former being King of Desmond, the latter King of Thomond, and chief of the Dalcassians—Kennedy, King of Thomond died (951)—Succeeded by his eldest son Mahon—The new King defeats the Danes—Is treacherously murdered—Brian becomes King—He defeats the Danes—Treaty with Malachy, the Ardri—Battle of Glenmama—Brian deposes Malachy and becomes Ardri himself—His reign—Battle of Clontarf.

IN the second century, among the chieftains who ruled the Irish clans, there were two who stood out in special prominence—Eoghan or Owen More, sometimes called Mogh Nuadhat, and Conn of the Hundred Battles. Neither wished to have a superior, nor an equal; each aimed at supreme power; they fought often and with varying success, and at length made peace by dividing the sovereignty of Ireland between them. The dividing line extended from Dublin due west to Galway Bay, and was marked by a line of low sand-hills.\* North of this line was Leath Cuin, or Conn's half, and included Ulster and Meath and Connaught. South of the line was Leath Mogh, or Owen's half, and included Desmond and Thomond and Leinster, though at no time was Leinster disposed to acquiesce in the rule of a southern Ardri, or to acknowledge any allegiance to a southern king.† Still unsatisfied, still hoping to extend his power, Owen More, after an interval of a year, made war upon the northern monarch.‡ Conn had the assistance of the famous Red Branch knights, and

\* Called Esker-Riada, and terminated at Clarenbridge in Galway. (*Four Masters*, Vol. I., p. 104.)

† *Book of Rights*, pp. 58-9. Note.

‡ *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 59.

above all of Goll, the Firbolg chief of the militia of Connaught,\* and, at the battle of Moylena, Owen was defeated and slain.† With his death the power of his family sank even more rapidly than it rose, and though Owen's son, Oliol Olum, was undisputed ruler of Desmond and Thomond, and was styled king of the southern half of Ireland, his authority over Leinster was not recognised. In modern times the Irish farmer has often divided his farm between two or more of his children, leaving to each an inheritance of poverty. In a similar spirit, and with equally unfortunate results, did Oliol Olum divide his kingdom between his two sons, Eoghan and Cormac Cass; the descendants of the former, in later times, being often called the Eoghanachts, and those of the latter, the Dalcassians. To Eoghan, who was the elder, he left the province of Desmond, to Cormac, Thomond, directing that the supreme honour of King of Munster, with the royal residence at Cashel, should be alternately held by their descendants.‡ The arrangement seemed equitable enough, but it weakened the power of Munster by dividing it; it fostered jealousies and rivalries, and the contests were frequent and bitter between the Kings of Desmond and Thomond, for the higher position of King of Munster.

Brian Boru was of the family of Cormac Cass. His father was Kennedy, son of Lorcan. He was slain in battle with the Danes (951).|| At his death Brian was but a lad of ten years. His elder brother, also, Donchuad, had been killed fighting the Danes (948), and the young prince must have imbibed from his earliest years, a hatred of these foreigners; and what he saw with his own eyes and heard with his own ears must have intensified that hate. The oppression of Tomar was still fresh in the minds of men, and the sons of Ivar, who then ruled at Limerick,\*\* followed but too faithfully in Tomar's footsteps. The Danish ships, which so often spread their sails upon the Shannon, still carried, as in Tomar's time, desolation and death to many a home; and the churches and monasteries on Lough Ree and the islands of the Shannon were no sooner repaired than they were again overwhelmed in ruin. In his father's palace, at Kincora, he had often heard of how the poor man's cattle were carried off, how his children were swept

\* Lady Ferguson; *The Irish before the Conquest*, p. 97.

† As Conn is said to have enjoyed peace for 20 years after this battle, and as he died in 157 (*Four Masters*) the date of the battle is ascertained as 137.

‡ *Book of Rights*, p. 72; Note.

|| *Annals of Innisfallen*, quoted by Todd; *Introd. to Gael and Gall*, p. 97.

\*\* *Gael and Gall*; Introduction, p. 105.

away into slavery, and how these pagans, with veneration for neither God nor man, loved to heap indignities on his Church and mocked at the mysteries of his faith. Often he saw his clansmen go forth to battle in proud array, and come back, their ranks broken and thinned, leaving their best and bravest behind them, struck down by the Danish battle-axes. The bards, who recounted the gallant deeds of the Dalcassians, had also to chronicle their defeats, and the piteous wail of the widow and the orphan too often replaced the exulting cry of victory. As he listened to the harper's song, if his cheeks glowed with pride at the recital of his kinsmen's deeds, his heart also melted with pity as he heard the mournful song of the captive held in Danish bonds and pining for his kindred and his home. For the harper excited sympathy for the oppressed, as well as emulation for the brave, and often the saddening strains of captivity and suffering were mingled with the livelier notes of the battle march. Filled with pity for his oppressed kinsmen and with indignation against their oppressors, he must have often longed to be at the head of his gallant clansmen, and to wrest from the grasp of these haughty foreigners those fertile fields along the Shannon, which were the birth-right of his family and his race.

Brian's elder brother, Mahon, became King of Thomond (951), his claims of descent being recognised by the chiefs of the Dalcassians. He was no less entitled to be King of Munster, for the last king was of the Eugenian line, and, by the will of Oliol Olum, it was the right of Mahon to succeed. But the chiefs of Desmond refused to recognise him, nor did they for several years, and then only with reluctance. Mahon's first concern was with the Danes. The ancient territory of Thomond, included the present county of Clare, and that part of Galway from Galway Bay eastward in a straight line to where the Suck mingles its waters with the Shannon, and beyond the Shannon, eastward still to Ossory and, southwards, below the city of Limerick.\* With this fine province the Danes had played sad havoc. From their strongholds at Limerick and Tradree,† they were absolute masters of the Shannon and the portion eastward to Ossory was so much in their power that Mahon finally abandoned it and had to content himself with the district west of the Shannon. Nor was even this part of Thomond free. The Danes were progressing westwards, and all the indications were that all Thomond would speedily become their prey. For a time Mahon, aided by Brian, kept up a desultory and indecisive struggle, and then he made peace with the Danes. To this peace

\* *Book of Rights*, p. 260. The southern boundary of Thomond is still preserved in that of the diocese of Killaloe.

† Near Bunratty, on the Clare side of the Shannon.



Brian refused to consent, and at the head of a few followers, equally determined and desperate as himself, he carried on the warfare still. He avoided pitched battles with the enemy, fell upon small detached parties of them, harassed them by night, waylaid them on their marches, cut them off in twos and threes and fives, and made the whole district west of the Shannon unsafe for them, except while they were within the shelter of their strongholds. In this guerilla warfare the sufferings of himself and his men were great. They had to often change their encampments, they had to sleep in woods and caves, and, worn out without sleep and often without food, in addition to their losses in battle, their numbers became so reduced, that at last Brian had but fifteen men under his command.\* Mahon remonstrated with him, and pointed out the futility of his conduct in wasting his strength and the lives of his clansmen against overwhelming odds. Brian's answer was a reproach. They should not, he avowed, abandon to dark foreigners and black grim gentiles the inheritance which their fathers and grandfathers had transmitted to them, and which in their own day they had known how to defend†; and he was sure that his grandfather Lorcan would have never made such a peace as Mahon had done, neither would Lughaid Menn, nor Corc, the son of Cas, the man who had first routed the foreigners. Either his reasons, or his reproaches, impressed Mahon. He called together the clansmen of Thomond to consult, and unanimously they declared for war. With Mahon and Brian at their head they crossed the Shannon, captured the Danish strongholds and, joined by the friendly tribes of the Eoghanacts and Muskerry,‡ they wreaked ample vengeance on the Danes and, finally (964), they entered Cashel in triumph.

While these events were in progress, Ivar of Limerick seemed to slumber, but the rapid progress of Mahon roused him from his repose. As head of the Munster Danes, he viewed their defeat with sorrow, and the sudden advancement of Mahon with alarm. To crush these aspiring Dalcassians, he summoned the Danes from all quarters of Munster. Nor was he without native allies, for Molloy, King of Desmond, and Donovan of Hy-Carbry and Hy-Fidghente, were jealous of Mahon, and with strange perversity, though they hated the Danes they hated

\* *Wars of the Gael and Gall*, pp. 61-2.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 67-70.

‡ They were the descendants of Carbry Musc, King of Ireland in the third century. Their territories included the present baronies of East and West Muskerry, County of Cork, and those of Clanwilliam and Upper and Lower Ormond, County Tipperary. (*Gael and Gall*, Todd's Introd., p. 115). *Vid.* also *Book of Rights*, pp. 42-45.

their own countrymen more ; and willingly and even eagerly they joined Ivar.\* This powerful confederacy, Mahon and Brian took measures to resist. The friendly Munster clans answered their call, even the Delbna † clan from Connaught came to their assistance, and when all were assembled they determined to await at Sulcoit, or Solohead (968), the attack of the advancing Danes. The place, some two miles north-west of Tipperary, was covered by a wood of sallow trees, which was used as shelter by the Irish troops. We do not know the numbers engaged, nor the tactics pursued, but it was the Danes who attacked, and some, if not all, of them were clothed in coats of mail ‡ but this did not avail them. The Irish had by that time learned to use the battle-axe as dexterously as the Danes themselves, recent victories had given them courage, and the memory of past wrongs nerved their arms in the fight. After a furious contest, lasting from sunrise to mid-day, the Danes retreated on all sides, pursued by the victorious Irish, and were slaughtered without mercy. With little delay, Mahon and Brian advanced to Limerick, and in the city fort, to which the Danes fled, they were mercilessly cut down and both fort and city plundered and burned. The spoils that fell to the victors are enumerated —“ beautiful and foreign saddles; jewels, gold and silver, and silks; soft, youthful, bright girls; blooming, silk-clad women; active, well-formed boys.” The trembling captives were marshalled on the hillocks of Saingel, outside Limerick, and “ everyone that was fit for war was put to death, and everyone that was fit for a slave was enslaved.”|| Mahon secured his position by getting hostages from the various Munster clans, taking special care to have hostages from Donovan and Molloy. Their ally, Ivar, fled with a remnant of his forces to Scatterry Island, which henceforth became his stronghold.\*\*

Under Mahon's vigorous rule the Danes were kept in check, the native chiefs were awed into submission, the clamour of faction was stilled, and Munster, for nearly eight years, enjoyed the blessings of peace. All this was little suited to Ivar and his Danes. Cooped up in their island-stronghold in the Shannon, they were compelled to confine themselves to the peaceful occupations of commerce, and had to desist from violence and plunder, while the Munster clans acquiesced in the rule of Mahon and

\* *Gael and Gall*, pp. 73-75.

† *Book of Rights*, p. 105. Their territory was the present barony of Moycullen (Galway). They were descended, like the O'Briens, from Cormac Cas.

‡ *Gael and Gall*, p. 77. There is mention made of a “ battalion of horsemen in corselets.”

|| *Ibid.*, pp. 79-81.

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 85.

contentedly reposed under the protecting shelter of his power. To stir up strife, to promote discord, to set clan against clan, above all to weaken and, if possible, to destroy Mahon was now Ivar's ambition. To Donovan and Molloy he again appealed, asking them if they would tamely submit to be subjects of him whom they had long held as inferior to themselves. The seed was cast upon a not unfruitful soil. Both chiefs were the representatives of Eoghan, and the sons of Eoghan regarded with disdain the chiefs of the Dalcassians. With larger territory and greater power, they often set at defiance the will of Oliol Olum, and seldom acknowledged any of the Dalcassians as King of Munster. This inherited antipathy had been already shown by Donovan and Molloy, and it was embittered by recent defeat. They believed that the present power of Thomond was due to the commanding talents of Mahon, and that if he were removed, the predominance of Desmond would return. Filled with these hopes, they entered into a conspiracy with Ivar\* and perpetrated a heinous crime, which has covered their names with perpetual infamy. Pretending friendship, Donovan invited Mahon to a banquet at his palace at Bruree. Mahon went, but as he had experience already of Donovan's treachery, he was distrustful, and stipulated for the safe conduct of the Bishop of Cork, and besides, he carried on his person the Gospel of St. Finbarr, a relic much venerated in the Irish Church. Thus protected, he counted on immunity from foul play. But Donovan would be restrained by no guarantees; he made Mahon prisoner and sent him southwards to Molloy, to be dealt with as they had already agreed. To lull suspicion, Molloy sent one of the Cork clergy with the escort which he sent north, and to which Mahon was to be delivered, but he had also given secret orders that he was to be murdered; and at a place called in modern times Redchair, on the confines of Limerick and Cork, and on the road from Kilmallock to Fermoy the deed was done. The priest was unsuspecting and so also was the Bishop of Cork, who accompanied Molloy, and was some distance in the rear. Mahon was unarmed and seeing the murderer about to strike, he threw to the priest the Gospel of St. Finbarr, lest it might be stained with his blood, but the fatal blow had been already struck, the shrine containing the book was bespattered with his blood, and with the sword plunged in his heart, Mahon fell dead. The horrified Bishop of Cork, turning to Molloy, asked what it all meant. He was answered with a sneer. "Cure yonder man" said Molloy, and putting spurs to his horse he rapidly rode away. †

\* *Gael and Gall*, pp. 85-7.

† Healy's *Ancient Schools and Scholars*, pp. 484-5; *Gael and Gall*, p. 89.



By the rule of alternate succession Molloy became King of Munster. Freed from the hated superiority of Mahon, backed by Donovan and Ivar, he regarded his position as unassailable, never thinking that Brian, the new King of Thomond, had equal ability or resources to those of Mahon. He was destined to discover his error. In the quaint language of MacLiag, Brian was not a stone in place of an egg, nor a wisp of hay in place of a club, but he was a hero in place of a hero.\* He deeply mourned his brother's death, with whom he had shared so many sorrows and so many triumphs, but the days of mourning soon passed and he turned to the sterner duty of retribution and revenge. His first attack was on the Danes. In Scatterry Island they thought themselves safe; the memory and sanctity of St. Senanus still hovered over the spot; and they expected that the holy associations of the place would shield them from Brian's rage.† But Brian was resolved on extirpating them and aided by his kinsmen the O'Donnells of Corcabascin, he manned a fleet, landed on the island, and almost annihilated the Danes (977), among the slain being Ivar and his sons. A remnant of the Limerick Danes under Harold now joined Donovan, and against this combination Brian turned his victorious arms. Entering Hy-Fidghente, he captured Donovan's fortress of Cathair Cuan, and both Harold and Donovan were killed.‡ Almost immediately he attacked Molloy, and at Bealach Leachta, near Macroom, he defeated him (978) with the loss of 1200 men, Molloy himself falling in the battle.|| In this way were the murderers of Mahon punished for their crime.

These victories made Brian undisputed King of Munster, and far beyond its limits he soon carried the terror of his name. The Deisi, who showed some sympathy with his late enemies, he compelled to give hostages, he interdicted the churches throughout Munster from giving sanctuary either to rebels or thieves, the Danes of Waterford became his subjects, or at least his allies, he imprisoned Gillpatrick, King of Ossory, and made his province tributary, nor was he satisfied until he entered Leinster (984), and received homage from Donal Claen, its king. Thus did he become monarch of the southern half of Ireland, and ruled over the whole extent of territory once ruled by his ancestor, Eoghan More. But it is the nature of ambition to be insatiable, and even with the ample enlargement of his dominions, Brian was not yet satisfied. With three hundred vessels, he sailed

\* *Gael and Gall*, p. 101.

† Indeed the *Four Masters* say that the island was *violated* by Brian. (*Four Masters*, Vol. II., p. 705.)

‡ *Gael and Gall*, p. 103.

|| *Ibid*, p. 107.

up the Shannon, ravaged Meath and Breffni, perpetrated great evils in Connaught (988), killing the son of the Connaught crown prince.\* His victorious progress filled the Ardri with alarm, nor was Malachy one to have his rights thus openly invaded, and, above all, to have his hereditary territory of Meath ravaged with impunity. Carrying the war into Brian's own territory, he entered Thomond, and defeated the Dalcassians (990) with the loss of six hundred men.† In the plain of Magh-Adhair, and under the shade of a great tree, the kings of Thomond were always solemnly inaugurated, in the presence of representatives of all the Dalcassian clans. In indignation, Malachy tore up this venerable tree, cut it into pieces, and used it to roof part of his palace.‡ Two years later he defeated Brian in Meath, and a little later still (996), he defeated him near Nenagh. || How this war between two such able chiefs would have ended, it was impossible to foresee, but both had the sense and patriotism to wish it ended, and at Plein-Phuttoge\*\* in Westmeath, on the shores of Lough Owel, they met (998) and agreed, as did Conn and Eoghan in olden days, to divide Ireland between them. Munster and Leinster, as also the tribes of Hy-Fiacra Aine and Hy-Many,†† were given to Brian, and the sole sovereignty of Leath Cuin, with this exception, to belong to Malachy, without war or trespass from Brian. The two kings became allies and friends and in more than one hour of trial they fought subsequently side by side.

The power of the Limerick Danes was now broken; the Danes of Waterford crouched in submission at Brian's feet, and in his war in Connaught were proud to fight in his army; but the Dublin Danes were still strong. They had been compelled to pay tribute to Malachy, but the tribute did not appreciably diminish their resources. Transferred from Malachy to Brian, they resolved to revolt against their new master. Perhaps they were encouraged by his recent defeats at the hands of Malachy, perhaps they hoped that the alliance between the two kings would not be either cordial or lasting, and that jealousies would arise to mar its efficacy; but most of all they hoped from their alliance with Maelmorra, King of Leinster, who placed the whole resources of his kingdom at their command. Brian was not one to delay when rebellion had to be crushed, and rapidly mustering

\* *Gael and Gall*, pp. 107-109.

† *Four Masters*.

‡ White's *History of Clare*, p. 54.

|| The southern historians are silent about these victories.

\*\* *Gael and Gall*, p. 109. Introduction, p. 142.

†† Hy Many is usually included in ancient maps in the northern half or Leath Cuinn.

his forces, he marched towards Dublin. On his way he was joined by Malachy, and to the joy of the whole nation, so long wearied with discord, the two kings fought together against the common enemy. In the county of Wicklow, near the present town of Dunlavin, the battle was fought (†1000). A low range of hills, running parallel to the Wicklow mountains, is here cut by the valley of Glenmama, and in this valley the opposing forces met.\* The broader plains of Kildare would have better suited the Danish cavalry, and thither they were hastening, but the rapidity of Brian's march disconcerted them, and in a narrow space the use of cavalry was of little advantage. After a severe contest the Irish forces were victorious, the Danes losing 4000, among them Harold, the Danish Crown Prince. Maelmorra of Leinster, feeling how guilty he had been, dreaded falling into the hands of his enemies, and hid himself in a yew tree,† but he was discovered and dragged from his hiding place by Murrogh, son of Brian, though his life was spared. Without delay the conquerors entered Dublin. The spoils in the captured city were immense and for the most part fell to Brian. Gold, silver bronze, precious stones, "buffalo horns and beautiful goblets," and to these are added many women, boys and girls who were carried away into slavery by the Irish.‡ From Dublin, Brian ravaged Leinster, levelled its fortresses, burnt its woods and then returned to Kincora, laden with spoil.

In the light of subsequent events it seems evident that before his treaty with Malachy, Brian had determined to become Ardri himself. The vigour and capacity of Malachy caused him to dissemble, but his plans were postponed rather than abandoned, and when the Danes and Leinster were vanquished, he thought the opportune moment had arrived. With his late enemies he formed alliances, giving his daughter to Sitric, the Danish King of Dublin in marriage, and himself taking Sitric's mother, Gormfleth, who was sister of Maelmorra of Leinster. || Aided by these new allies, and in violation of his treaty with Malachy, he entered Meath and demanded hostages. The cavalry of his Danish allies pushed forward in advance; Malachy fell upon them and cut them to pieces\*\* and Brian, disconcerted by this disaster, withdrew. But he was tenacious and persevering and the next year (1002) he again entered Meath, established his headquarters at Tara, and peremptorily demanded that Malachy should abdicate in his favour.

\* *Gael and Gall*, p. 111; Introduction, pp. 145-6.

† *Ibid.*, p. 119.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 115-17.

|| *Gael and Gall*, p. 119; Introduction, pp. 148-9.

\*\* *Four Masters* at the year 999.



For nearly 600 years the supreme position of Ardri had belonged to the descendants of Nial—the chiefs of Meath, Tirowen and Tirconnell. The succession was sometimes irregular and often disputed, but it was always confined to the same family and from the ninth century it was narrowed down to the princes of Meath and Tirowen; and among these the rule of alternate succession prevailed, an arrangement similar to that which existed in the south between the Kings of Desmond and Thomond. Time had given stability to the arrangement, and possession of the throne for centuries had established prescriptive rights of which few royal houses in that age could boast. Even the most ambitious hesitated to assail a dynasty which the changes of centuries had not overturned, and except Fedlimy in the ninth, and Cormac in the tenth century, no king of either north or south had presumed to take the honour from the house of Nial. Nor was there in the eleventh century among these princes the same discord as in the centuries which had passed. The number of Ardris who died peaceably was increasingly large, and of those who fell in battle, all, or nearly all, fell in battle with the Danes. Malachy was no mere faction fighter; he knew the evils of dissension; he appreciated the advantage of a strong central government, strong enough to make itself respected and feared; he recognised the great capacity of Brian, knew that his resources were great and that with the Danes and Leinstermen as his allies his power seemed overwhelming. Yet his own title to the supreme position was unquestioned; what he had inherited he was unwilling to abandon without a struggle; and if he could have obtained the help of the Northern princes, he would have fought rather than submitted. To Aedh of Tirowen,\* Eochy of Uladh, and Cahal of Connaught he sent Slevin, his Chief Bard, who appealed for aid to those princes with a bard's impassioned eloquence.† He indignantly asked Aedh was he going to submit to one who was but lately the chief of a Munster clan, was he going to disgrace the memory of his ancestors and surrender without a blow the inheritance won by the genius of the great Nial. Aedh's answer was that when a Tirowen prince was Ardri, he was able to defend his position, and that he would not risk his life in battle with the Dalcassians, in defence of sovereignty for any other man. Hoping to succeed where his Chief Bard had failed, Malachy appealed to Aedh in person, offered even to abdicate in Aedh's favour and to fight by his side. This offer Aedh was willing to accept, but his clansmen had to be consulted

\* Aedh was Malachy's uncle, and had therefore a personal interest in maintaining the supremacy of Leath Cuinn.

† *Gael and Gall*, pp. 121-127.

and they decided to reject it, except on the insulting condition that Malachy would surrender to Tirowen half of his ancestral territory of Meath. Disgusted and disheartened, Malachy returned home, called his clansmen together and the decision was to submit to Brian. With twelve score horsemen, Malachy rode to Tara and submitted to Brian, telling him that he would have fought if he could have got the assistance that he sought.\* He was received with every mark of respect and became Brian's ally and friend.

The resources of the new Ardri were such that no power in Ireland could successfully resist him. Yet the Northern princes Aedh and Eochy still held out, and the submission of Cahal of Connaught was sullen and reluctant. With a strong fleet Brian sailed up the Shannon, menaced Connaught with a large army at Athlone, and Cahal was compelled to give the requisite hostages.† In the same year (1003) the Ardri marched northwards as far as Dundalk where he had a conference with Aedh and Eochy and made a truce with them for a year. When the year was over he again marched northwards and received submission from all as far as Armagh, but in the meantime the northern princes had quarrelled and gone to war, and at Crabh Tulcha ‡ both Aedh and Eochy were slain. The favourable moment was seized by Brian and he took hostages from all the north. On his way south he stopped at Armagh and laid an offering of twenty ounces of gold on the high altar of the church, a fact commemorated in the *Book of Armagh*. Perhaps, as Todd thinks, by this politic measure he wished to secure the good will of the clergy, and obtain for his infant dynasty the prestige of the Church's support. The submission of the more powerful princes secured, he might feel safe upon his throne, but there were still some lesser chiefs from whom trouble, if not danger, might arise. To guard against such a contingency he made a circuit of the whole country taking hostages as he went along. With the Dublin and Waterford Danes and his own Munster clans he left Kincora (1005), passed through Roscommon, where he was joined by the Connaughtmen, thence over the Curlew mountains through Sligo, Leitrim, Donegal and Tyrone, thence to Dalriadia, Uladh and Dalaradh || and south to Meath, where his followers were disbanded, the

\* *Gael and Gall*, p. 131.

† *Ibid.*, p. 133.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 133. The place is now called Crewe, near Glenavy, in the barony of Upper Masserene, County of Antrim. (*Four Masters*, Vol. II., p. 749, note.)

|| These three principalities would be represented by the present Counties of Antrim and Down.

Connaughtmen going west, the Danes to Dublin and Waterford, and Brian himself to Kincora.\*

The Ardri was then past his sixtieth year, and in his old age he might expect peace after so many wars and rest after so many labours. His wish was to repair in peace the ravages of war. Roads and bridges were constructed, harbours built, new churches erected and ruined ones repaired, and as a terror to rebellion several strong fortresses were erected throughout Munster.† Under his vigorous rule justice was administered with impartiality, lawlessness was suppressed, the piracy of the Dane and the foray of the native chief were alike ended; and the legend has survived, that a maiden, young, beautiful, and richly dressed, and with a gold ring on her wand, might pass unmolested from Tory Island to Glandore.‡ In the churches the priest could offer Mass and the people worship in security, the monks in their convents chanted the psalms as of old, the hermit fasted and prayed without his devotions being interrupted by a pagan foe, and in the schools and colleges erected and liberally endowed, the Ollave was paid to teach and the children encouraged to learn. Engaged wholly in commerce, the Danes were rapidly enriching the seaport towns and paid regularly their tribute of wine to the Ardri; the Boru tribute was revived—a fatal mistake—and was paid by Leinster; the other chiefs paid their various contributions; and, at Kincora, Brian dispensed a hospitality not unworthy of a great king. In his palace the songs of triumph were once more heard, the valour of the Dalcassians was extolled and sometimes the old monarch himself took his harp and played for the assembled guests. || For nearly ten years Ireland enjoyed a period of almost unbroken peace.\*\* Once there was unrest among the Northern clans (1010), and again, in Ossory, but Murrough, the Ardri's son, suppressed these disturbances, and the personal intervention of Brian was not called for, until the Danes and Leinster united against him, and he was compelled to make the greatest effort of his life, as it was also destined to be his last.

The imposition of the hated cow tribute †† was galling to the Leinstermen, who submitted only through fear. The restraints

\* *Gael and Gall*, p. 137:

† *Ibid.*, 141

‡ *Gael and Gall*, p. 139. *Introd.*, p. 159.

|| The harp in Trinity College, commonly called Brian's harp, is not as old as the time of Brian (*O Curry's Manners and Customs*, Vol. III., p. 269.)

\*\* This is MacLiag's account, but Todd has justly remarked that the *Annals* for the period do not bear him out. (*Introd.*, p. 159, note.)

†† The date at which Brian reimposed it is uncertain, perhaps after becoming Ardri.



of a strong government were equally galling to the Danes. Sharing the common misfortune of subjection, both Danes and Leinstermen entertained the common hope of deliverance; they watched for a favourable moment to strike; the embers of discontent smouldered, and a spark only was required to kindle them into flame. As part of his tribute the Leinster King was bringing to Kincora (1013), three pine trees for ship's masts, and amongst the carriers some dispute arose as to who was to be in the first place. To end the dispute the king himself took the first place, and in his exertions in carrying the tree one of the silver buttons of his tunic was torn off.\* At Kincora he handed the tunic to his sister, Gormfleth,† asking her to sew on the displaced button, but the lady, instead, heaped reproaches on him for being a mere vassal, and angrily flung the tunic into the fire. The position she occupied in Brian's palace is not easily explained. She had married in succession Olaf Cuaran of Dublin and Malachy, the late Ardri. By each she was repudiated, and finally she married Brian.‡ By Olaf, she was the mother of Sitric, the Danish King of Dublin; by Malachy also she had a son, but she was not the mother of any of Brian's children.|| Nor can she have been his wife if she was also Malachy's wife, for they were all Christians, and the bond of Christian marriage is the same for a king as for a subject. Kings have rarely been slow to break through moral restraints and it seems likely that her connection with Brian was one of those irregular and illicit connections which have often disgraced a throne. Nor was Gormfleth's character inconsistent with this assumption. In the words of the Saga, in all physical and natural endowments, "she was the fairest of women," but in her moral conduct "she did all things ill." Her taunting words irritated Maelmorra, and his irritation was soon shown. Looking on at a game of chess which was being played between Murrough and his cousin Conaing, Maelmorra suggested a move, which ended in Murrough losing the game. Murrough angrily remarked, "that was like the advice you gave the Danes which lost them Glenmama." Maelmorra with equal anger, replied "I will now give them advice and they shall not be defeated." "Then," said Murrough,

\* *Gael and Gall*, p. 143. The tunic with the silver buttons was a gift from Brian, and was the token of Maelmorra's vassalage.

† She was the daughter of Murrough, son of Fin, King of Leinster. (*Four Masters*, at the year 1030, the year Gormfleth died.)

‡ Halliday's conjecture that she first married Brian and that, divorced by him, she married Olaf, is ridiculous (*Scandinavian Kingdom of Dublin*, p. 78, note.)

|| *Story of Burnt Njal*, Vol. II., p. 323. MacLiag says she was the mother of Donough, son of Brian (p. 143).

"you had better remind them to have a yew tree ready for your reception."\* In bitterness of heart and in secret, Maelmorra left Kincora the following morning. Brian despatched a messenger after him imploring him to return and that all necessary explanations and apologies would be given him, but the angry king would not be appeased: he even killed the messenger of peace, and hurried home to prepare for war.

Arrived at Leinster, Maelmorra recounted to his assembled clansmen the insults he had received. They decided to revolt and were quickly joined by the Dublin Danes, by Flaherty O'Neill of Tirowen and by O'Rorke of Breffni. Those two latter chiefs suddenly invaded Meath and defeated Malachy, but in a second battle were defeated.† Retreating towards Dublin, Malachy pursued them and ravaged the country as far as Howth, but he was met by the Leinstermen and Danes, defeated with the loss of two hundred of his men, pursued to his own country, which was plundered to its centre and "captives and cattle innumerable carried off from the Termon of Fabhar."‡ Unable to make headway against so many enemies, Malachy appealed to Brian who with his son, Murrogh, set out to his assistance. They overran Ossory and Leinster taking many prisoners, and from Kilmainham laid siege to Dublin, but being unable to capture the city, they had to raise the siege and return home.||

The next few months were spent by both sides in preparing for the great struggle which all felt to be near. From Kincora the summons went forth and was readily answered by the clansmen of Thomond. From Loop Head to Limerick and Lough Derg, and across to Burren, Corcomroe and Corcobascain, washed by the waves of the Atlantic, the Dalcassians came, under their chiefs, the O'Briens, the O'Deas, the MacNamaras, the Macinerneys and the O'Quinns. Proud of their present pre-eminence and their past achievements, they remembered that theirs was the privilege to be first into the battle and last out of it; they had unbounded confidence in Brian, and were ready to follow even to death the lead of him who had so often led them to victory. From across the Shannon the fighting men of Ormond came.\*\* The country of the Hy Fidhgheinte, once disgraced by the treachery of Donovan, furnished their contingent; and time had so far softened ancient enmity, that Cian, son of Molloy, came with the forces of Desmond. The

\* *Gael and Gall*, p. 145.

† *Four Masters*, at the year 1012. *Gael and Gall*, pp. 147-9. In one of these battles Donal, Malachy's grandson and heir, was killed.

‡ *Gael and Gall*, p. 149.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 151.

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 167. *Four Masters*, at the year 1013.

Deisi were under their chief, Mothla, and from Connaught were the Hy Many, under Teige O'Kelly, and the Hy Fiacra, under O'Heyne. The princes of Uladh and Tirowen remained in the north in unfriendly and gloomy neutrality but the Meathmen were under the ever-faithful Malachy.\* From the friendly Scots of Caledonia came a contingent under Donal, great-steward of Mar.† When all these forces were assembled there must have been not less than 20,000 assembled under the command of the old warrior King.

In bringing together the Danes, nobody was more active than Gormfleth. Since Maelmorra's visit to Kincora, she was repudiated by Brian and had become so "grim" against him that she wished him dead.‡ She had sent her son, Sitric, to the Danish leaders to beg their assistance, bidding him agree to any terms which they might demand. From Norway and Denmark, from the Orkney and Shetland Isles, from Northumbria and Man, from Skye and Lewis and Cantire and Cornwall, these Northmen came.|| The two best known of their leaders were Brodir of Man and Sigurd, Earl of Orkneys. Both made it a condition to be acknowledged King of Ireland if Brian was defeated and slain, and also to get Gormfleth in marriage, and to each Sitric secretly made the required promise.\*\* The lady was now old †† and had been already the wife or mistress of three kings in succession by each of whom she was repudiated, and it is unlikely that either Brodir ‡‡ or Sigurd were attracted by her doubtful virtue, or coveted her faded charms. But both these chiefs were ambitious; they expected to found a kingdom in Ireland as their countryman, Sweyn, had in England; and for this design the aid of Gormfleth, the mother of the King of Dublin, and sister of the King of Leinster, would be useful. By Palm Sunday (1014) the Danes and Leinstermen were assembled in Dublin and the whole surface of Dublin Bay was covered with their ships. Their united forces were at least as large, perhaps larger, than those of Brian, and these daring Northmen were experienced in war; yet some doubts were mingled with their hopes of success in the coming fight. Even their stern natures

\* *Gael and Gall*, p. 169.

† *Ibid.*, p. 175.

‡ *Burnt Njal*, Vol. II., p. 324.

|| *Gael and Gall* (Introduction, p. 168, note).

\*\* *Burnt Njal*, pp. 327-8.

†† She must have been, since her son Sitric was King of Dublin since his father went to Iona in 980—thirty-four years before these events.

‡‡ Brodir had been a Christian, but had renounced Christianity (*Burnt Njal*, 329). Sitric also appealed to Brodir's brother Ospak, but he refused to fight "against so good a King" as Brian.



were not inaccessible to superstition ; their Skalds and prophets were held in the greatest reverence, and in certain wondrous events, which lately happened, they feared they read the signs of impending disaster. Brodir and his men saw a shower of blood fall, a battle in the air was witnessed between birds, swords and spears were seen in the sky wielded by invisible hands\* ; in Iceland a priest, saying Mass, had his vestments stained with blood ; and in Caithness, twelve Valkyries were seen in a bower, weaving out of men's entrails, with swords as shuttles, the grim woof of war.†

Boldly taking the offensive, Brian had already marched towards Dublin and plundered the district of Fingal from Dublin to Howth. This district was inhabited by Danes, and their friends in the city beheld with anger the ruin of their kinsmen's homes, and hastened their preparations for battle. They knew also that Brian had sent his son, Donogh, to Wicklow with a portion of his forces and that Donogh had not yet returned, and moreover, a prophecy urged them not to delay, for Brodir, who was skilled in sorcery, had foretold ‡ that if the battle were fought on Good Friday, Brian would fall, but if on any other day his foes would all fall, and so Good Friday was fixed upon. The city of Dublin was then altogether south of the Liffey,|| and on the sloping plain, north and east by the Tolka, and the sea, extending to Clontarf and beyond it, the whole Danish army encamped on Thursday evening. On the rising ground, near Phibsborough, was a wood called Tomar's Wood, and in front of this and facing the Danes, the Irish army encamped. On the Danish side a renowned champion named Plat sent a challenge to single combat to the Irish camp, which was accepted by Donal, Great Steward of Mar : and as the two armies stood facing each other on Friday morning, the two champions met. Advancing from his own side, Plat shouted "Where is Donal ?" and Donal's answer came back, "reptile, I am here." With the two armies as spectators, the combat was fought and both Plat and Donal soon fell, each mortally wounded.\*\* The battle then became general. Each army was in three divisions. The Danish left wing on the Tolka, consisting of the Dublin Danes, and a thousand Norwegians in coats of mail, was commanded

\* *Burnt Njal*, Vol. II., pp. 330-331.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 337-343.

Brian also had his warning for the family Banshee of the Dalcassians, Evan of Craiglee, appeared to him the night before the battle and revealed to him that he should be killed. (*Gael and Gall*, p. 201.)

‡ *Burnt Njal*, Vol. II., p. 333.

|| *Joyce's Short History of Ireland*, p. 217.

\*\* *Gael and Gall*, pp. 175-177.

by Amrud and Carlus, princes of Denmark; in the centre Maelmorra commanded the Lienstermen, while on the right the foreign Danes were under Brodar and Sigurd. Facing the Dublin Danes on the Irish right, were the Dalcassians under Murrogh, in the centre were the Munstermen under Cian and Donal, Conaing and Mothla; on the left were the Connaughtmen under O'Heyne and Teige O'Kelly.\*

Before the battle began, Brian, mounted on a battle-charger and with a cross in his hand, rode in front and solemnly addressed the army, bade them remember all that the Danes had done, that in fighting them they fought for their country and their faith, that they were fighting on the day on which the Saviour of the world had died, and that He would be with them in the fight. Inspired by these words, they rushed upon the foe. It was Good Friday, the twenty-third of April, at six o'clock in the morning, just as the tide was at its full. There was no cavalry in either army, nor can we discern any system of tactics according to which masses of men make or resist attack. The battle was rather a series of single combats in which personal prowess was the deciding element. Each clansman gathered round his own standard, and his chief, as he was first in peace, was also first in danger, and in valour, and among his foes sought out some chief whom he marked as his antagonist and his victim. It was a fiercely contested fight. Morning passed into mid-day, mid-day to evening, the tide had ebbed and again was flowing, but the battle still raged. Standards had fallen, the ranks were fatally thinned, the ground was thickly covered with the dead and wounded, yet neither side would give way and, even as the sun descended, both Celt and Dane still faced each other in that grim death struggle. On the left, Teige O'Kelly and O'Heyne with many a gallant Connaughtman were dead, and the great Sigurd himself was among the slain. In the centre, Conaing and Maelmorra had slain each other, and numbers of brave Munstermen had fought their last fight. On the right, the slaughter was great, for in no part of the battle was the contest more fiercely waged. The dead lay in heaps, and on the blood-soddened earth the mail-clad Norwegian and the hardy veteran from the Fergus and the Shannon, after their fierce encounter,

\* *Gael and Gall*, pp. 171-197. *Joyce's Short History*, pp. 218-25. *Four Masters. Annals of Loch Ce.* Lady Ferguson's *The Irish before the Conquest*, pp. 273-77. The arrangement of the various divisions has been taken from Lady Ferguson. It allows Morrogh to remain at the post of greatest danger, that is near Duvall's Bridge, where he was liable at any moment to be attacked by fresh troops from the city, and it leaves Sigurd on the right wing of his own side, in easy communication with his vessels in the Bay—a likely arrangement.

slept together peacefully in death. Towards evening Murrogh, whose battle-axe had brought down many a foeman, encountered in single combat the Norwegian prince Amrud,\* and closing together both fell, Murrogh uppermost. With his sword he stabbed the foreigner, who, before he died, snatched a knife from Murrogh's belt, mortally wounding him. Amrud died in a few minutes, Murrogh lived till the following day. Though disheartened by the death of their chief, the Dalcassians still fought on, and at last the Danes on all sides gave way. It was then past six o'clock, the Danish ships were being carried out by the ebbing tide, and the Danes, unable to reach them, retreated by the shore and across the Tolka to the Liffey, then spanned by Duvall's Bridge. Many perished in the sea, many in crossing the Tolka, but most of all between the Tolka and the Liffey, for at this point they encountered Malachy and his troops. Malachy had come to Clontarf to fight, but his magnanimity forsook him; he refused to aid Brian in reaping fresh glory, and during the day, on a rising ground between the Tolka and the Liffey, he sullenly held aloof, an idle spectator of the combat. But the temptation to attack the retreating and hated Danes was too great to be resisted; he swooped down upon them and cut off their retreat by Duvall's Bridge. His troops were fresh while the Danes were wearied by twelve hours incessant fighting. Their resistance was feeble; they were slaughtered in hundreds, and many who escaped the battle-axe or the sword were drowned in trying to cross the river.†

In his tent, a little in front of Tomar's Wood, Brian remained during the day and asked his attendants from time to time how the battle went. He was told that all was confusion, that there was a noise as if seven battalions were cutting down Tomar's Wood, but that Murrogh's standard still floated and that heads were falling wherever it was borne.‡ Brian was satisfied, declaring that while Murrogh's standard floated, it would go well with the men of Erin. Again, towards the close of the day, he inquired and was informed that it looked as if Tomar's Wood were on fire, the brushwood destroyed, a few stately trees only remaining—the soldiers had fallen, a few only of the chiefs were left, and Murrogh's standard was down. It was doleful news, for the old King had centred the hopes of his house in Murrogh, and when *he* was dead he protested he did not wish to survive. His wish was soon granted. His bodyguard had gone in pursuit of the flying Danes, and Brodir and a few followers hiding in the

\* *Gael and Gall*, p. 195. Introduction, p. 174. He is called son of Ebric, son of the King of Lochlan, and again son of the King of France.

† Joyce, pp. 220-22. Note 3.

‡ *Gael and Gall*, pp. 197-201.



wood noted the unprotected tent, rushed in, and with a single stroke of his battle-axe clove in the King's skull.\* Now, he said, "let man tell man that Brodir killed Brian." The Dane was quickly surrounded and taken prisoner, and, according to the Norse Saga, his body was cut open and his entrails slowly wound out of him and thus he died.†

In that age it would be difficult to find a battle in which the losses were so heavy, in proportion to the numbers engaged. A moderate estimate places the loss on the Irish side at 4000 and on the Danish side at least 7000. Scarce any of the leaders were left, and it was this loss the Irish had most reason to bewail. Alone of all their kings, Brian was able to crush the Danes and to repress the turbulence of the native chiefs. His death loosened the bonds that held these chiefs together: the death of Murrogh blighted the hope of a peaceful succession and of a strong central government: after Clontarf native unity and strength were over, and the reign of discord and chaos was about to begin.

\* *Gael and Gall*, p. 203. Brodir at first passed him by, thinking he was a priest.

† *Burnt Njal*, Vol. II., p. 337.

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## CHAPTER X.

### *A Long Period of Discord.*

Condition of the Irish forces after Clontarf—Discord among the Chiefs—Donogh O'Brien and the King of Desmond—Magillapattrick of Ossory—Malachy becomes Ardri—His death—Wars of Donogh O'Brien—His reign as King of Munster—Turlogh O'Brien succeeds him—The Kings of Tirowen—Long struggle between Donal O'Loughlin of Tirowen and Murtogh O'Brien of Thomond—Wars among the lesser Chiefs—The Dublin Danes—Career of Turlogh O'Connor—Aedh O'Loughlin becomes Ardri—Succeeded by Roderick O'Connor.

WHEN Donogh O'Brien returned to Dublin, on Easter Sunday, the great battle was over, and, as he viewed the battlefield, thickly strewn with unburied corpses, and mingled with the survivors of the fight, he could estimate the losses and gains. Without doubt, the invaders had been worsted, the dreams of Brodir and Sigurd to found a Danish kingdom in Ireland had come to nought, and of those foreigners, whom love of plunder or glory had attracted from so many lands, the greater number had fallen in the battle. So much the Irish had gained, but these gains were counterbalanced by losses which were irreparable. Brian, his son Morrogh, his grandson, Turlogh,\* his nephew, Conaing—all had perished on that fatal field, and of the many sons that once were his, only Donogh and Teige survived. So thinned were the Irish ranks, so exhausted the survivors, so numerous the wounded that if again attacked by a strong force they must inevitably have suffered defeat. Nor were the Danes altogether crushed. The garrison of Dublin had suffered nothing and the numbers in the city were largely increased by fugitives from the battle. Sitric† was so strong, that Donogh felt un-

\* *Gael and Gall*, p. 193. He was son of Morrogh, and was but fifteen years of age. He was drowned at the Weir of Clontarf, *i.e.*, in the Tolka, "with a foreigner in his right hand and a foreigner in his left hand and a stake of the weir through him." Such is the language of MacLiag. It is easy to see that he was a poet.

† Sitric, with portion of the troops, did not take part in the battle but watched it from the battlements of the city. (*Gael and Gall*, p. 209).

able to attack him ; he was even emboldened to demand portion of the oxen which Donogh had taken as plunder from Wicklow, and threatened to attack him if his demands were not complied with. But Donogh set his menaces at defiance and Sitric was awed into inactivity.\* For several days the Irish were employed in burying their dead ; the bodies of thirty chiefs were despatched to their own territories, there to receive a chieftain's funeral honours ;† and the monks of Swords took charge of the bodies of Brian and Morrogh, and had them conveyed to Armagh. For twelve days, offices and Masses were said for the souls of Brian and his son, and, at length, in the Cathedral of Armagh, amid all the pomp and splendour of the Church's liturgy, the body of the greatest of the Irish kings was laid to rest.‡

After Brian's death the flames of discord were soon kindled. On the return home from Clontarf, Cian of Desmond laid claim to the throne of Munster, contending that by the rule of alternate succession, the Munster throne should now be filled by a prince of the race of Eoghan. Donogh denied these claims, protested that the rights of Desmond under the will of Oliol Olum had been extinguished by the conquests of Brian, that the Dalcassians had acquired their right to the Munster throne by force, and by force they were ready to maintain it. The southern forces had then reached Mullaghmast, a fortified place, six miles from Athy, and Donogh, in expectation of attack, proposed to put the wounded within the shelter of the fort, an arrangement which the wounded refused to accept. They were determined to take their share in the coming battle, stuffed moss into their open wounds, and, like their unwounded comrades, were prepared to meet the enemy, sword in hand.|| Cian relied for support on Donal, chief of the Ui Eochach,\*\* and Donal was willing to assist him, but he would play no disinterested part. Like Cian, he was of the race of Eoghan ; he was of a younger branch, but primogeniture was not recognised ; his father Dubhdavoren had in fact been King of Munster, or, at least King of Desmond, and he thought his right to that position was at least as strong as that of Cian. Yet he would join him against the Dalcassians, but only on condition that whatever territory was conquered, should be equally divided between them. To this Cian would not consent, the attack on Donogh O'Brien was abandoned, and before the year had expired Donal

\* *Gael and Gall*, p. 211.

† *Ibid.*, p. 213.

‡ Lanigan, Vol. III., p. 425.

|| *Gael and Gall*, p. 215.

\* *Ibid.*, pp. 248-9. Introduction, p. 193—Genealogical Table, IV,



and Cian went to war, in which Cian was defeated and slain.\* Donogh's troubles were not yet over. Passing by Athy, his wounded dressed their wounds and rested by the banks of the Barrow, and here another enemy awaited them—Donogh, son of Gillapatrick—Prince of Ossory with his whole army drawn up in battle array. This prince remembered that his father had once been put in fetters by Brian Boru, and that his own territory of Ossory had been wasted and plundered by the same king, the previous year, and to glut his vengeance he now determined to fall on Donogh O'Brien's attenuated ranks. He offered the alternative of submission or battle, and, without hesitation, Donogh O'Brien accepted battle. The wearied soldiers gallantly supported their chief, and the wounded displayed a heroism which has rarely been equalled. They insisted on fighting, directed that stakes should be cut in the neighbouring wood and driven in the earth, and that, as they were unable to stand, a wounded soldier should be tied to each stake, his arms in his hands, an unwounded soldier on each side of him, and thus would they met the foe. Such heroes are rarely conquered. The Ossory men were awed at the sight, perhaps intimidated by such heroism; they desisted from the attack, and the Dalcassians were allowed to pursue their journey.† When they reached home, the loss in the battle and on the march had so decimated them, that Donogh had less than one thousand men under his command.‡

Without any formal election Malachy became Ardri. His hereditary rights could not be overlooked, his services against the Danes were remembered, and when Brian was gone there was nobody who could successfully compete with him for the supreme honour. But this recognition by the native chiefs was only partial and incomplete; he was tolerated rather than recognised; and, among the sons of Brian especially, it was their impotence alone that restrained them from contesting his right by force. The submission of the Northern princes—Tirowen, Tirconnell and Uladh—was more cordial, but even *they* felt little enthusiasm for one whom an ambitious rival had once dethroned. But whatever others thought, the Danes had good reason to feel that his vigour and energy were unimpaired, and that he was still as much to be feared as when he overwhelmed them at Glenmama and at Duv gall's Bridge. Joined by Flaherty O'Neill of Tirowen, he defeated the Dublin Danes (1015), destroyed the fortress of Dublin, and burned the

\* *Annals of Ulster*, 1014. *Four Masters*, 1013.

† *Gael and Gall*, p. 217.

‡ *The Irish before the Conquest*, p. 281. Lady Ferguson gives the exact number as 850.

greater part of the city. Two years later, he entered Leinster, wasted the district of Hy-Kinsella, again defeated the Danes, and compelled Leinster to pay tribute.\* A short time before his death, he entered a lonely retreat—Cro-Innis, in Lough Ennell, near Mullingar, where he spent his last years in penance and mortification, and where he died (1022).† After Malachy's death, supreme power passed for a time into the hands of two men, Corcran, an anchoret, and Con O'Loughlin, Chief Poet ‡ and this order of things remained until Con died (1024), or rather until he was killed, || for like many other rulers his end was brought about by violence. What was the nature and extent of the jurisdiction possessed by these two men is not clear; one of the annalists informs us that the country was governed "like a free state."\*\* To make a poet and an anchoret rulers of a country was certainly an unusual arrangement, and perhaps not a wise one, but it shows that amid all the discord and war and violence that prevailed, respect for religion and sanctity still survived.

Since Clontarf the career of Donogh O'Brien had been a troubled one. His brother, Teige, was the elder brother, and the chiefs of Thomond, respecting the claims of age, for the most part sided with him. But Donogh had his own followers and was unwilling to be content with a subordinate position. Ultimately, war broke out between the brothers, and for years this fratricidal struggle was prolonged. Tempted by the divisions between the sons of Brian, Donal of Desmond with a large force entered Thomond, designing to conquer that province. For the time Donogh and Teige suspended their quarrels and united against the invader. Donal was defeated and slain, †† (1015), and instead of Thomond being conquered by Desmond Desmond itself was conquered by Thomond. When this was done, the quarrel between Teige and Donogh was renewed and lasted until Teige's death (1023.) In that year he was treacherously slain by O'Carrol of Eli-O'Carrol, at the instigation of Donogh, †† and then, his hands reddened with his brother's blood, Donogh became King of Munster. With a large force he swept through Meath, Bregia, Leinster and Ossory,

\* *Annals of the Four Masters. Annals of Loch Ce.*

† *Ogygia*, Part III., Chap. 93.

‡ *O'Curry's Manuscript Materials*, p. 9.

|| On those who killed him God performed a "poet's miracle" for they died an evil death and their unburied corpses were devoured by birds and wolves. (*Annals of Loch Ce.*)

\*\* *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 173.

†† *Annals of Ulster.* The battle was fought at Limerick.

†† *Four Masters.*

taking hostages from each province (1026),\* later on, (1034),† he attacked and defeated Breffni, and when the forces of Leinster and Ossory combined in revolt against him (1050),‡ he defeated them. Finally (1060), he defeated the Connaught men, and compelled Rory O'Connor to give him hostages. In war he had almost reached the position once held by his father. Nor was he undistinguished in peace. He enacted salutary laws, sternly repressed robbery, caused the Sabbath to be observed; and when, in the famine of 1050, his Munster subjects in their distress seized on the property of the Church, he convoked a Synod of the prelates and lords of Munster and enacted laws, "which speedily checked the wide-spreading sacrilege and averted the anger of God."|| In his old age troubles fell thick upon him. His brother Teige had left a son, Turlogh, who had been fostered at the court of Dermot Maelnambo, King of Leinster. Dermot was married to Donogh's daughter, but the ties of kindred were as nothing compared to the ties of affection, between Dermot and his foster son. He watched over the boy with the greatest care, became the guardian of his interests and the champion of his claims, contending on his behalf that, as the son of Teige, he, and not Donogh, was the rightful heir to the Munster throne. Dermot sacked Waterford (1030), ravaged Ossory (1042), carried off captives and cattle from the Deisi (1048), laid Limerick and Iniscaltra in ashes (1058), and defeated Donogh himself (1061) at Slieve Crut in Tipperary.\*\* While Donogh was engaged defending himself against his powerful adversary, the King of Connaught entered Thomond, committed great depredations and laid the palace of Kincora in ruins.†† These accumulated disasters weakened the power and broke the spirit of Donogh. He was now old and, feeling unable to contend against all his enemies, and, perhaps, anxious to atone for his crimes, he went on a pilgrimage to Rome and died there (1064). He is said to have presented the crown and sceptre of Munster to the reigning Pope, and these were afterwards presented by Adrian IV. to Henry II. of England.‡‡

Under the guardianship of Dermot Maelnambo, Turlogh O'Brien became King of Munster, and in these circumstances

\* *Four Masters. Annals of Loch Ce.*

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Four Masters* at 1049.

|| *Cambrensis Eversus*, Vol. II., p. 41. The *Four Masters* say that "peace and good weather" was the consequence of this law.

\*\* *Cambrensis Ev.*, p. 43.

†† *Annals of Loch Ce* at the year 1061.

‡‡ From this, supposing it true, it has been sometimes argued that the Pope acquired dominion over Ireland and was acting within his rights when he conferred it on Henry II.



Dermot might be considered the most powerful among the Irish kings, and in fact is sometimes numbered among the Ardris.\* He had already subdued the Deisi and Waterford, carried off captives from Meath, received homage from Connaught (1066), and scourged the Danes so much, that "from Dublin to Allen was one scene of conflagration." But his career of conquest was closed (1072), for, in that year, he was defeated and slain by O'Mellaghlin of Meath. At his death, without any opposition from any quarter, Turlogh O'Brien became supreme ruler of Leath Mogha. This did not satisfy his ambition, and he proceeded to subdue Leath Cuin. Meath and Connaught gave him hostages, and with a large army, with Leinster, Meath, Connaught, and the Dublin Danes he marched north (1075) intending the subjugation of the northern province. The princes of the north encountered him at Ardee and utterly defeated him, so that he had to retire south, without hostages or prey, and "with a great slaughter and loss of his army."† This defeat does not seem to have seriously impaired his strength, for the following year (1076), he chastised Hy-Kinsella, where some restiveness was shown, he dethroned the reigning King of Dublin and put his own son Murtagh in his place, and deposed the King of Connaught, Rory O'Connor.‡ At a later date (1084), while he was occupied in Meath, the Connaught princes entered Thomond, "burned forts and churches and carried off great spoils,"|| and, in the same year, a formidable revolt was organised by O'Rorke of Breffni, who was joined by other malcontent chieftains. Against these, Turlogh despatched an army under his son, Murtagh, and, near Leixlip, O'Rorke and his allies were overthrown with the loss of four thousand men.\*\* Murtagh captured O'Rorke, cut off his head, and had it posted up on the gates of Limerick.†† When Turlogh died (1086), he was the foremost in power and influence among the Irish kings, in ability and energy, both in peace and war, not unworthy of the grandson of Brian. Abroad also his fame was great. By Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, who corresponded with him, he is styled the magnificent King of Ireland, and he congratulates the people of Ireland that God had given them such a king.

Since the death of Malachy (1022), no prince of the race of Nial had been able to reach the position of Ardri. Malachy's

\* He is so numbered by Ware. *Cambrensis Eversus*, Vol. II., p. 45.

† *Four Masters*. *Loch Ce*. *An. Clonmacnoise* at 1073.

‡ He, (O'Connor), submitted to him at least.

|| *An. Loch Ce*.

\*\* *Four Masters*. The battle took place at Monecronock, near Leixlip.

†† White's *History of Clare*, p. 86.

son, Connor O'Mellaghlin,\* was certainly not destitute of capacity, but his resources, as King of Meath, were small; against his most powerful rivals the O'Briens, he could not always hold his own, and from necessity, rather than from disposition, he had to acknowledge the supremacy of his southern rival. Had the Northern Hy-Nials allied themselves with their kinsmen of Meath, they might have broken the power of the O'Briens, but no such alliance was formed. Flaherty O'Neill had helped Malachy, after Clontarf, in his wars against the Leinstermen and Danes, but apparently was unwilling to give the same help to his son, and there is no further instance, except one, for a century, in which the princes of the Northern and Southern Hy-Nials made common cause. Nor were the Northern Hy-Nials† themselves always able to agree; on the contrary, they were often the bitterest enemies. With a richer territory and greater resources, Tirowen from its central position was enabled to make frequent and successful attacks on the neighbouring states, and, under a succession of able chiefs, it maintained its ascendancy throughout Ulster. Upon Tirconnell and Uladh its attacks were frequent, and the injury inflicted often great. Tirowen ravaged Tirconnell (1028), carrying off great spoils three years later; Uladh was overrun by the same power,‡ and the same year, Tirconnell was invaded and its King slain. These events occurred while Flaherty O'Neill was on a pilgrimage to Rome, and while his son, Aedh, ruled. Both father and son died (1033), but neither the capacity nor inclination to make war upon others expired with these chiefs; and the *Annals* record that Tirowen attacked Tirconnell (1043).|| Again, under Ardgar O'Loughlin, the ruling chief, Tirowen attacked Dalaraigh, and carried off two hundred prisoners and a great spoil of cattle, and, extending the area of his depredations, Ardgar entered Connaught (1062), and carried off six thousand cows and one

\* Early in the eleventh century, surnames came to be used—about the time of Brian Boru. Instead of saying Connor, son of Malachy, son of —, it became Connor, descendant of Malachy or Maelsachlin or O'Mellaghlin, a softened form of Maelsachlin. The prefixes O and Mac equally signified descendant, and thus it happened that Brian's descendants became O'Brien, Niall's, O'Neill; Loughlins, O'Loughlin, or MacLoughlin; Connors, O'Connor; Murrogh's, MacMorrogh.

† The Northern Hy Nials were the princes of Tyrone and Tirconnell. The Southern Hy Nials were those of Meath; all were descendants of Niall of the Nine Hostages, and inherited his dominions between them. (*Gael and Gall*, Gen. Tables, p. 245-6.)

‡ *Annals of Loch Ce*. Aedh O'Neill on that occasion carried off 1200 captives and 3000 cows.

|| *Four Masters*. *Loch Ce*.

thousand prisoners.\* After these acts of plunder and violence he retired to Armagh to do penance, and there he died (1064), and was buried in the mausoleum of the kings.† In alliance with the other northern princes, his successor, Aedh, was able to defeat Turlogh O'Brien at Ardee (1075), and a few years later (1080), Aedh's successor (Donal) defeated Fermanagh. This Donal determined to become Ardri, regarding Murtagh O'Brien, the ruling King of Munster, as an usurper, and the heir to the usurping Brian. But Murtagh was not easily subdued. He was equally ambitious and easily powerful as Donal, and between these two chiefs—both men of the highest capacity—a life-long struggle was waged, a struggle fierce, bitter and persistent and which, at the close of their lives, was undecided still.

Donal ravaged Uladh (1084) and carried off great spoils, and four years later he defeated Rory O'Connor of Connaught, and compelled him to join him in an attack on Munster. With a large force they advanced south, and taking O'Brien unaware, they ravaged and plundered Thomond, destroyed Kincora, burned Limerick, and brought away into captivity many of the Munster chiefs.‡ O'Brien determined to retaliate, and, in the following year (1089), in command of a large force, he sailed up the Shannon, plundering everything as he went along; but O'Connor blocked his boats on the river, O'Mellaghlin attacked him from Meath and he had to hurriedly retrace his steps.|| Chastened by defeat, O'Brien consented to meet in friendly conference Donal O'Loughlin, O'Mellaghlin and O'Connor of Connaught, and all agreed to acknowledge Donal O'Loughlin as Ardri. But the submission of Murtagh was hollow and insincere, a subordinate position ill-suited his aspiring talents; he merily wished to gain time and on some pretext he entered Meath (1094), and killed its king, O'Mellaghlin, and passing on to Dublin, he defeated Godfrey, King of the Danes. Enraged at this attack on his ally of Meath, Donal O'Loughlin took up arms and advanced south against Murtagh but the Archbishop of Armagh interfered (1097) and succeeded in making peace between them. Three times subsequently, when north and south were face to face, he again made peace, but he was not always successful, for both O'Loughlin and O'Brien were very determined and very difficult to restrain. Determined once and for all to crush his northern rival, Murtagh advanced up the Shannon (1100), and marched his army as far as Ballyshannon,

\* *Loch Ce.*

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Loch Ce.* The *Four Masters* give the number of captive chiefs as 160.

|| *Ibid.*



while the Dublin Danes, as his allies, supported him from the sea ; but the expedition did not achieve its purpose, and the Danish fleet "were cut off both by drowning and killing."\* Undeterred by this failure, Murtagh still persevered, and, with the tenacity of the O'Briens, he resolved to make even a greater effort than he had yet done. Accompanied by the forces of Leinster, Meath and Connaught, he went north (1101), and O'Loughlin, unable to cope with such superior forces, retreated before him. Murtagh overran Tirconnell and Tirowen, and, in revenge for the destruction of Kincora, he demolished the royal palace of Ailech, directing his soldiers to carry away the stones of the palace to Limerick.† Advancing eastward, he received the submission of Uladh, and at last it seemed as if he could truthfully declare he was Ardri, and had reached the position once occupied by Brian Boru, for all Munster acknowledged his rule ; Leinster, Meath and Connaught were fighting in his army, and under his command, Uladh had just given him hostages, and all that remained was Tirconnell and Tirowen. Yet O'Loughlin was unconquered still. Wisely declining a contest with O'Brien, he waited until he had gone southward and then attacked Uladh (1103.) Murtagh advanced to the relief of his ally, and, unwisely dividing his forces, he left one division near Armagh, while himself, taking the remainder, attacked and plundered Dalaraiddh. Donal seized the opportunity given him, fell on the army encamped at Armagh, and completely routed them with the loss of many of their chiefs, taking, besides, great spoils, including the royal pavilion and standard. This was the last occasion on which these two chieftains fought, for on subsequent occasions,‡ when they were preparing for battle, the Archbishop of Armagh || made peace between them.

Though occupied for the most part in fighting each other, both these kings had other troubles also on hand. Donal attacked Connaught (1110),\*\* and plundered Fingal (1112). As to Murtagh, he was urgently called to Dublin (1102), where Magnus, King of Norway, had landed with a large invading force—perhaps he expected to succeed, where Brodir and Sigurd had failed. With O'Loughlin still unsubdued, Murtagh did not wish to have an additional enemy in Magnus, and when he came to Dublin, a conference was arranged between them, and instead of fighting there was feasting, instead of war there

\* *Annals of Loch Ce.*

† *Four Masters.* They carried away the stones in their sacks.

‡ *Loch Ce* at the years 1107-9-13.

|| This was Celsus—the friend of St. Malachy.

\*\* *Loch Ce.* He carried off a thousand prisoners and several thousands of cattle.

was a wedding. A son of Magnus was married to a daughter of Murtagh, and the two kings became friends.\* Magnus left Dublin, but the next year he landed at Uladh, where he was defeated and slain. Nor was Murtagh, though he often plundered churches, ungenerous to the church in his own province. The *Four Masters* record (1101), that he made a grant to a religious order of the royal palace of Cashel, "without any claim of laymen or clergymen on it,"—a grant such as no king had ever made before.†

Towards the close of their lives, both Murtagh and his opponent retired to monasteries. Murtagh entered the monastery of Lismore, and died there (1119), being buried at Killaloe; Donal O'Loughlin entered the monastery of Derry, where he died (1121), "the most distinguished of the Irish for personal form, family, sense, prowess, prosperity and happiness, for bestowing of jewels and food upon the mighty and the needy."‡

While the greater chiefs were constantly engaged in war, so also were the minor chiefs. The same year that Flaherty O'Neill of Tirowen died (1033), it is on record that the O'Mellaghlin's of Meath quarrelled and even went to war in which Murtagh O'Mellaghlin was victorious over his kinsman, Connor O'Mellaghlin, and in which several chiefs were slain; the Eli and the Hy-Fiacra Aine were at war, and so also were the Hy-Fiacra of Ardstraw and Fermanagh. Flan, son of Donal O'Mellaghlin, was blinded by his brother, Connor (1037), a similar fate befell the King of Leinster's son, at the hands of Magillapattrick of Ossory and the Tanist of Hy-Kinsella was blinded by the son of Maelnambo.|| At the year, 1041, the annalist declares that the events of the year between "slaying and plunderings and battles" are so numerous, that he could not undertake to relate them all.\*\* At 1051, the King of the Deisi was blinded by the O'Felan, the son of Cahal O'Connor of West Connaught was blinded by Aedh O'Connor, and MacLoughlin was expelled from the chieftainship of Tullahoge, and Aedh put in his place.†† That same year, Aedh was slain by the men of Fermanagh (1054), and the clan of Ui Meath ‡‡

\* *Four Masters.*

† *Ibid.*

‡ Such is the panegyric of the *Annals of Ulster* in which their partiality for the northern prince can be detected.

|| This barbarous and cruel torture was of frequent occurrence among these Irish chiefs.

\*\* *Annals of Loch Ce.*

†† *Ibid. Four Masters.*

‡‡ Partly in Louth (Omeath) and partly in Monaghan. Hi Meath Tire or Inland Meath (*Book of Rights*, pp. 148-9—note).

was defeated by the Ui Eochach.\* Rory O'Flaherty of Iar Connaught was slain by Aedh O'Connor (1062), and Rory of Fermanagh, killed by O'Rorke of Breffni. O'Kelly of Hy-many was slain by Aedh O'Connor (1065), and Aedh himself killed in battle (1067) by Art O'Rorke of Breffni.† But it is useless to multiply instances; the list might be indefinitely prolonged. Year after year, every clan and every sept was at war with its neighbour; from Innishowen to Desmond, from Iar Connaught to Athcliath, there was the same monotonous iteration of war and plunder; and disorder and discord were supreme. Nor were the Danes idle as might be expected. The overthrow at Clontarf and their subsequent defeats by Malachy had diminished their resources; no further aid came from beyond the sea, and they were unable in consequence to profit by the divisions and disorganisation among the native chiefs. The Dublin Danes were Christian; their king, Sitric, had built and endowed a church at Dublin, and towards the close of his life had gone on a pilgrimage to Rome.‡ Yet, at intervals, these Danes either plundered themselves, or allied themselves for purpose of plunder with some native chief. They invaded Meath (1027), but were defeated; they landed at Rathlin (1045) and killed three hundred of the natives, and in alliance with Murtagh O'Brien, they invaded Ulster. If to this be added, that they occasionally sacked a monastery or church, we have exhausted the list of their achievements.

After the death of Donal O'Loughlin (1121), there was an interval of some years during which there was no Ardri. No prince of the Tirowen, or Dalcassian race, was strong enough to establish a supremacy over the whole island, nor indeed over his own province. It had become recognised that the rule of the stronger only should prevail, hereditary claims were ignored and the example of Brian had pointed out to every ambitious adventurer, that if he was sufficiently strong and sufficiently unscrupulous, he might become supreme among the Irish kings. Just such an adventurer appeared in the person of Turlogh O'Connor. His ancestors had long been kings of Connaught: it is the testimony of O'Donovan that no family in Ireland, or even in Europe, can trace its descent through so many generations of legitimate ancestors as these same O'Connors. || They were a warlike race and in the long struggle between North and South for pre-eminence, they had not been mere idle spectators. Turlogh's father, Rory, had been taken prisoner

\* An Armagh clan.

† *Four Masters. Loch Ce.*

‡ Lanigan, Vol. III., pp. 432-43.

|| *The O'Connors of Connaught*, by the O'Connor Don, p. 3.



(1092),\* by his turbulent vassal, O'Flaherty of Iar-Connaught, and according to the barbarous practice of the times had his eyes put out. Disqualified by his blindness from continuing king—and probably it was this O'Flaherty intended—Rory retired to the monastery of Clonmacnoise, where he died after twenty-six years spent there.† His son, Donal, became his successor, but for some reason he was deposed (1106) by Murtoigh O'Brien, and his young brother, Turlogh, placed on the throne by the same king. Turlogh was then but eighteen years old and from one so young, the Munster king expected that little was to be feared, and that perhaps, on the contrary, he might become the ally, or even the vassal, of Munster. If he expected this, he grievously erred, for Turlogh soon showed an independence of character, which made it plain that among the Irish chiefs, he was not disposed to play the role of vassal but of master. He co-operated with Murtagh O'Brien and Morrogh O'Mellaghlin (1109) in an attack on Breffni, and perhaps it was to punish him for thus being in alliance with the Munster king, that Donal O'Loughlin entered Connaught (1110), laid waste much of the province and carried away three thousand prisoners and many thousand cattle.‡ Moved by discontent, or ambition, a Connaught tribe, the Conmaicne, thought the time opportune for revolting against Turlogh, but, at the battle of Ross (1110), Turlogh defeated them with the loss of many of their chiefs.|| Next year he plundered Fermanagh, a little later (1113), he was the ally of Murtagh O'Brien against O'Loughlin of Tirowen, but two years later (1115), he entered Thomond and plundered it as far as Limerick.\*\*

Turlogh's prowess was soon recognised by all Connaught, the chastisement inflicted upon the Conmaicne had blighted the hopes of brooding revolt, and neither O'Kelly nor O'Flaherty, the two most powerful of the Connaught chiefs, even once during his long reign presumed to be numbered among his foes. But to be King of Connaught did not satisfy Turlogh's ambition, and secure of the allegiance of his own province, he meditated conquests beyond the Shannon. His military resources were not

\* *Four Masters.*

† *Ibid.* It seems from the *Annals of Loch Ce* that he had taken Orders.

‡ *Four Masters.*

|| The Conmaicne dwelt in the north of the County of Galway, *i.e.*, the present barony of Dunmore, at least the branch of the tribe that fought Turlogh. Ross is near Rathcroghan in Roscommon, from which it seems evident that the Conmaicne invaded Turlogh's hereditary territory. (*Four Masters* and *Book of Rights*, p. 100.)

\*\* *Four Masters.*

large, but it was not by superior strength he always expected to succeed. To foster dissension in each province, to set up two or three kings instead of one, and to have at least one of these his own dependent and creature, to promote quarrels between chiefs and then to be the decisive arbiter of their quarrels, to ally himself with Breffni against Leinster, and with Breffni and Leinster against Munster—these were the means he was ready to employ, and by these means he reached pre-eminence. He entered Meath (1115), interposed in a quarrel between the O'Mellaghins, set up two kings, instead of one, and got submission from both, and about the same time made an alliance with O'Rorke of Breffni, and then, joined by his allies of Meath and Breffni, he entered Munster and measured swords with the Dalcassians.\*

The time was opportune for his designs. The once dreaded Murtagh O'Brien was a penitent at Lismore, and, among the monks of that famous monastery, he had ceased to think of wars and battles, and in feebleness and old age was concerned only about the interests of his soul. His brother, Dermot, who filled the throne since his abdication had just died (1118), and some confusion might probably arise as to the succession to the vacant throne. Turlogh joined by Morrogh O'Mellaghlin and O'Rorke of Breffni entered Munster, wasted and plundered as far as Glanmire in Cork, and, reviving the old rule of alternate succession, cut Munster in two, giving Desmond to MacCarthy, who was the representative of Eoghan, and Thomond to Connor O'Brien.† On his way north he passed by Kincora and wishing to humiliate the O'Briens, and to be revenged for all his family and province had suffered at their hands, he levelled the palace to the earth, and cast it, both wood and stone, into the Shannon. Before the year expired, he had got submission from Leinster and Ossory and the Dublin Danes, and had reached a position of authority and influence never reached by a Connaught King. Almost every year for several successive years, he marched with an army into Munster, sparing neither churches nor territory on his march, and it is especially recorded that with MacMorrogh, King of Leinster, and Magillapatrik of Ossory and the Dublin Danes he passed down the Shannon with a great fleet, and that he and his allies remained for a time at Killaloe "consuming the provisions of Munster."‡ The next year he disagreed with his ally O'Mellaghlin, entered his territory which he ravaged and

\* *Four Masters.*

† *Ibid.* O'Flaherty's *Ogygia*, Part III., Chap. 67.

The MacCarthy's, when surnames began to be used, were the principal of the Eoghanact tribes in Munster.

‡ *Four Masters*, at the year 1119.

expelled him from Meath; and when Donal O'Loughlin of Tirowen came to O'Mellaghlin's aid he temporised, made peace with O'Loughlin, and for a time O'Mellaghlin was unmolested. But Turlogh O'Connor only waited for a better opportunity, and when Donal O'Loughlin was dead, joined with O'Rorke of Breffni, he entered Meath (1126), and instead of one king of Meath, he set up three.\* Meantime he had built bridges over the Shannon—at Athlone, and Shannon Harbour on the Shannon, and at Ballinasloe on the Suck—and in the manner of the ancient Ardris held the fair of Teltown (1120) thus indicating his title to the monarchy of all Ireland.† He marched to Dublin (1126), and installed his son, Connor, as King of Dublin and Leinster, then ravaged Ossory, defeated MacCarthy of Desmond and burned his camp near Kilkenny, established for months his headquarters at Ormond, and laid waste the surrounding country.‡ Division had weakened the Munster forces, but though they were weakened they were not yet subdued, and these repeated depredations would have roused to action a less spirited race than the Dalcassians. O'Brien fitted up a fleet on the Shannon and fought (1127), a naval battle with O'Connor in which, however, Munster was beaten, and henceforth Turlogh, on the Shannon, was unmolested and supreme.|| As long as Desmond and Thomond continued to quarrel they were both plundered, for they were helpless at the mercy of a ruthless enemy; but at last (1132), they united in self-defence, marched into Connaught, killed Cathal, son of Cathal O'Connor, royal heir of Connaught, demolished the fortresses of Galway and Dunmore, and plundered a great part of the country.\*\* Through the influence of the clergy, a conference was held in Westmeath, between the Connaught and Munster kings, peace was made, and Munster was allowed a period to recover from her many disasters. During all these years, the Connaught king made but one attack (at 1130) on Ulster when he attacked it from the sea, and plundered Tory Island and the coast of Donegal. The next year, O'Loughlin and the Ulster forces entered Connaught; the Connaughtmen retreated, then detached a portion of their forces and attacked the rear of the Ulster army near the Curlew Mountains, and the invaders were defeated with heavy loss, and were glad to conclude peace.

War was so widespread in 1145, that the *Four Masters* lament that "Ireland was a trembling sod," but they might have

\* *Four Masters*.

† *Ibid.* O'Donovan's Note.

‡ *Four Masters*.

|| *Ibid.* Turlogh's fleet consisted of one hundred and ninety vessels.

\*\* *Ibid.*, at 1132. *Loch Ce*, 1133.



written the same of almost any other year at that time. War was everywhere. In the north, every two clans fought, and scarce a year passed that a quarrel did not arise between Tirconnell and Tirowen. Neither the memory of their common ancestors nor considerations of personal interest were able to restrain them. In the south no sooner did the Munster princes make peace with Turlogh O'Connor (1133), than they hastened to make war upon each other, and in 1135, "many of the men of Desmond fell by those of Thomond."\* A little later (1137), Connor O'Brien and Dermot MacMorrogh, King of Leinster, captured Waterford and defeated MacCarthy, King of the Deisi and Connor O'Brien did homage to MacMorrogh.† Connaught was at war with Meath and Breffni, and Connor O'Brien preyed upon Connaught (1142); his successor, Turlogh, acted similarly in the following year; O'Mellaghlin was at war with Breffni (1145), and with Fermanagh, while the Munster men entered Connaught, carried off Tieve O'Kelly of Hy-Many into captivity, and killed Rory O'Flaherty of Iar-Connaught. Five years later (1150), they again entered Connaught and demolished the stone castle of Galway.‡ The fickle and capricious character of an Irish chieftain's allegiance in these days is illustrated by the conduct of O'Rorke, who, in 1137, joined Meath against Connaught, then submitted to Turlogh O'Connor and attacked Meath (1138), two years later, was the ally of Meath against Connaught, and again submitted to Turlogh, even joined him in dismembering Meath, of which he got a third share, and finally (1145), the *Four Masters* record that he again turned against Connaught.

During these latter years, Turlogh O'Brien of Thomond had been gaining ground, and his attacks on Connaught especially were so frequent and vexatious, that Turlogh O'Connor determined to chastise him. In alliance with Meath and MacMorrogh, and at the invitation of Teige O'Brien of Desmond, he entered Munster (1152), and at Moanmore, near Emly, he met the forces of Turlogh O'Brien. That prince was returning from a plundering expedition in Desmond and had nine thousand men under his command. O'Connor's forces were superior but not braver; the Dalcassians fought with desperate energy; they were willing to die but not to yield; nor did they until they were almost exterminated. Turlogh's son and heir was killed, two of the O'Kennedys, eight of the O'Deas, nine of the O'Shanaghans, five of the O'Quins, five of the O'Gradys,

\* *Four Masters*. The battle was fought in the present County of Tipperary.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.*

twenty-four of the O'Hogans, four of the O'Hehirs, five of the Hearnés—all chiefs of the Dalcassians, besides these, seven thousand lay dead or wounded on that disastrous field; and all that remained of Turlogh O'Brien's army was one shattered battalion. The defeated Turlogh was deprived of his throne, and his place given to Teige O'Brien.\*

Thomond and Desmond ruled by his creatures, Turlogh O'Connor might reasonably believe that his hold on Munster was secure, and little dreamt that he was about to endure the greatest humiliation of his life; yet so it happened. The deposed Turlogh O'Brien made his way to Tirowen and begged the assistance of Aedh O'Loughlin, its king; and the ambitious Northern was flattered at seeing the descendant and heir of Brian Boru, a suppliant in his palace. He resolved to assist him, and to attack Turlogh O'Connor, who was then in Westmeath.† His movements were rapid and skilful; O'Connor was taken off his guard and was disastrously defeated, and was compelled to give hostages to O'Loughlin, who now claimed to be Ardri. Teige O'Brien was deposed, and his eyes put out (1153), and Turlogh was restored to the throne of Desmond.‡ Turlogh O'Connor's submission to O'Loughlin was merely nominal, and the next year (1154), with a strong fleet he attacked Tirowen from the sea. As the northern king had no fleet, or at least no adequate fleet, he brought Danish mercenaries from the Scotch and Manx coasts, and off the coast of Innishowen the battle was fought. The Connaught force was victorious, but their commander was killed; the Danish ships were captured. This was the last battle fought by Turlogh O'Connor.¶ He died (1156), and was buried as he had requested beneath the high altar of St. Kieran at Clonmacnoise. His death removed the foremost figure from the theatre of Irish affairs, one who for nearly fifty years had been concerned in all the great events that had happened, and in most of which his was the controlling influence. In his own province his loss was most keenly felt, for these Connaughtmen were proud of their king, who had raised them to such pre-eminence, and who from his palace at Rathcroghan had imposed his will on so many princes beyond the Shannon. In all his wars they readily supported him, for he usually led them to victory, and often returned from his wars laden with the spoils of Munster and Meath. Nor was he undistinguished in peace. He sternly punished injustice, not

\* *Four Masters.*

† He had just taken from Dermot MacMurrough the faithless Devorgil, wife of Tighernan O'Rorke.

‡ *Four Masters.* White's *History of Clare*, p. 102.

¶ *The O'Conors*, p. 43.

sparing even his own son ; he was liberal to the monasteries, especially to Clonmacnoise ; he set up a mint and coined money ;\* he built bridges over the Shannon ; the Abbey of Cong, the picturesque ruins of which still stand on the Corrib, was built and endowed by him, and the stone cross of Tuam, and the processional cross of Cong, show that he encouraged Irish art. No king since Brian Boru had such influence or power. Sometimes he has been called Turlogh the Great, and if we remember the age in which he lived, and compare him with his contemporaries, we may allow that he has some title to the name.

At the death of Turlogh, Aedh O'Loughlin received the submission of all the Irish Chiefs, except Roderick O'Connor, the new King of Connaught, who, instead of submitting, plundered Tirowen from the sea (1157), and Munster and Ossory from land,† but in Meath he was defeated by the Ardri (1159), and was compelled to submit. O'Loughlin then became undisputed Ardri, and unity of government at last appeared ; but he soon showed that he was unworthy of his position, and by an act of treachery and cruelty he lost both his throne and his life. In one of the many expeditions with which he harassed Uladh, he had taken Dunleavy, its chief, prisoner (1165), and he had deposed him. On his release, Dunleavy made his way to O'Carroll of Oriel, whom he knew to be the Ardri's special friend, and, at O'Carroll's request, Dunleavy was restored to his position. But he gave ample guarantees of future good behaviour, gave hostages, including his own daughter, and with mutual promises and oaths to which O'Carroll was a party, peace was established between Uladh and Tirowen.‡ Yet, in defiance of these promises and oaths, the Ardri, in the following year, made an unprovoked attack on Uladh, wasted and ravaged the district, carried away Dunleavy, prisoner, and cruelly put out his eyes. Enraged at this perfidy, O'Carroll hurriedly raised an army, fell with fury on the Ardri, and at Letterluin, in the present county of Armagh, O'Loughlin was defeated and slain ; || and thus ingloriously perished the last Ardri of the race of Nial.

Disgusted with O'Loughlin's conduct, the native chiefs no longer looked to Tirowen for a leader, and, with singular unanimity, they agreed to give to Roderick O'Connor the hostages which he sought. Tirconnell, Breffni, Meath and the Dublin Danes submitted to him, and at Dublin, whither he had marched, Roderick was inaugurated king, "as honorably as any king

\* Healy's *Ancient Schools and Scholars*, p. 547.

† *Four Masters*.

‡ *Ibid.* Besides his daughter he gave him a son of every chieftain in his province.

|| *Four Masters*.



of the Gael was ever inaugurated.”\* Ossory and Leinster, and all Munster at once recognised him, and he was allowed without protest, and apparently with approval, to divide Tirowen between Nial O’Loughlin and Aedh O’Neill.† He convoked at Athboy (1167), a great council of princes and ecclesiastics, where many useful regulations for the government of the entire country were made, and the members of which separated—an unusual thing in these days—“without controversy or battle.”‡ The following year (1168), he celebrated the Fair of Teltown—the last time it was ever celebrated—with unusual magnificence, the horsemen present being so numerous that they extended nearly seven miles. || Weary of war, it seemed at last that the energies of the people were to be directed into peaceful channels, that the reign of discord was over, and the reign of unity and peace was about to dawn.

\* *Four Masters.*

† He also divided Munster between O’Brien and Dermot MacCarthy.

‡ The whole of the gathering and assembly was 13,000 horsemen (*Four Masters.*)

|| *Four Masters.*

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## CHAPTER XI.

### *Decay of Religion and Learning.*

Prosperous state of the Church at the close of the eighth century—Ravages of the Danes—Churches and schools destroyed, resulting in injury to religion and demoralisation of the people. Monastery lands seized by native chiefs—Lay Abbots—Irish scholars of the ninth and tenth centuries—Dicuil, Dungal, Scotus Erigena, etc.—Unity of Government under Brian Boru—Temporary improvement in religion and learning—After Clontarf, state of Ireland worse than ever—The Bards—Schools and scholars of the eleventh and twelfth centuries—Abuses in the church—Letters of Lanfranc and St. Anselm—What St. Bernard wrote—Reforms effected by St. Malachy.

THE three centuries which succeeded the life and labours of St. Patrick make up the most flourishing period in the history of the Ancient Irish Church. With marvellous rapidity that Church had passed from infancy to maturity, the little mustard seed had become a mighty tree under the shade of which dwelt the sons and daughters of the Scots—brehons, bards, princes, children against the wishes of their parents, slaves despising the menaces of their masters.\* In the sixth century many great monasteries arose, where the best of the Irish fasted and prayed and learned and taught; the whole country seemed turned into a vast religious camp, and before the century closed, zeal for souls and enthusiasm in God's service had sent Columba to convert the Picts† and Columbanus to practise austerity and shed the light of his example under the shadow of the Vosges mountains.‡ The celebrity of the Irish schools became so great, that in the two succeeding centuries from the Saxons and Franks numbers of students came to study, and while on so many continental lands barbarism and ignorance held sway, Ireland

\* *Tripartite Life of St. Patrick*, p. 369. This happened in St. Patrick's lifetime—that the slave became a Christian, while the master remained a pagan.

† Reeves' *Adamnan*, p. 73.

‡ *Monks of the West*; Book VIII

deserved to be called—as she has been by a great English writer—the School of the West.\* Nor was there any evidence at the close of the eighth century that the vigour of the Irish Church was impaired. Her schools flourished as in their palmiest days. There were so many Saxon students at Armagh, that one-third of the city was called the Trian Saxon or Saxon Third,† and the *Four Masters* record the death, during the eighth century, of many of her famous scholars. Dungal, whose knowledge of theology and Sacred Scripture was so remarkable, and who, against Claudius and the Western Iconoclasts, was the greatest champion of orthodoxy, had but recently left the School of Bangor,‡ and if we wish to know in what estimation Clonmacnoise was held even at the Court of Charelmagne, we have but to read the letter of Alcuin to Colgu, one of the professors at Clonmacnoise. || The Paschal controversy was long since over, for the obstinacy of the Northern monks had at last yielded to the persuasive eloquence of Adamnan,\*\* and if the Pelagian heresy had ever flourished in Ireland, or was being revived in the seventh century, as Pope Honorius seems to have feared, †† there is no mention of it in the native Annals, nor in the complaints made from time to time against Irishmen abroad. Nor is it likely that orthodoxy would have sought for a champion—as it did in the case of Dungal—amongst men who came from a church tainted and vitiated by heresy. The Irish Church, it was apparent, had attained to age, without losing the freshness or vigour or energy of youth, and all the indications were that she was entering on a career of renewed prosperity, and that the glory of her future would not be overshadowed even by the glory of her past. Yet, so fallible is human foresight, that she was just about to enter on a period of decay, when her very life was to be imperilled, for the tempest of Danish invasion, which had swept with fury over so many lands, just burst on the coasts of Ireland.

A Danish writer, with a laudable desire to defend the memory of his ancestors, has endeavoured to show that the Danes were not so bad as they are represented to have been, and that, as to their ferocity and fanaticism, the verdict of history has been too severe. He indignantly denies that they carried away and destroyed so many manuscripts, which would be quite useless for them, written in a language they did not

\* Boswell's Johnson, chap. 32.

† Healy, p. 119.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 390. Lanigan, chap. 20

|| Usher's *Sylloge*.

\*\* Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*; Book V., chap. 15.

†† Usher's *Sylloge*.



understand.\* They promoted trade and coined money † and in these respects especially were above, rather than below, the Irish in civilization. Ledwich, an Irishman, goes further still. He states it as certain, "from every evidence supplied from antiquity," that Ireland, when the Danes came had no stone buildings, ‡ and that the well-known Round Towers were the work of Danish hands—"the Ostmen began them and they were imitated by the Irish." || This latter assertion—that the Danes built the Round Towers—might be admitted, if the distinction is remembered between an efficient and an occasional cause: these towers were built by the Irish because of Danish depredations and to serve as a refuge against their attacks. Ledwich was a learned man, but his veracity was not equal to his learning, his prejudices against the Ancient Irish were strong, and neither his bold assertions nor Worsae's zealous advocacy can avail on behalf of the Danes. The judgment of history has too many facts in its support and that judgment is, that the Danes built up nothing and knew only how to destroy. It is well known that wherever they landed, robbery and murder followed, and that their raven banner was the symbol of desolation and ruin. Nor were they less ferocious in Ireland than elsewhere, and in Ireland, as in other countries, their fury was directed most against Christian churches and monasteries and for the extirpation of Christianity itself. Of their various attacks on the several monasteries the records are necessarily incomplete, for in that age of turmoil the machinery of scholarship was disorganised. Yet in the native *Annals*, incomplete though they be, we find that Armagh was plundered six times in the ninth century and three times in the tenth,\*\* and that during the same period Clonmacnoise was plundered four times, Glendalough twice, Bangor, Clonard, Kells and Clooneenagh once each, and Kildare five times. What took place at Bangor and Armagh will illustrate the injury done, for these are types of the ruin effected elsewhere. In Bangor (824), the monastery was plundered, the oratory broken into and the relics of St. Comgal, the founder, shaken from the shrine in which they were placed, and the shrine itself carried away. Armagh was plundered (832), three times in one month, a few years later (839) its oratory and cathedral were burned; it was again plundered

\* Worsae; *The Danes and Norwegians in England, Scotland and Ireland*, p. 301.

† *Ibid.*, p. 334.

‡ *Antiquities*, pp. 141-3.

|| Ledwich's *Antiquities*, p. 288. Petrie's *Round Towers*, p. 9.

\*\* *Four Masters*, at the years 830-39-43-50-67-91; 920-34-51, &c., &c.

and burned (867), with its oratories, all its property and wealth that could be carried was carried away, and one thousand persons were either killed by the sword, or driven into the burning buildings, where they were suffocated; later still (890) it was again plundered, seven hundred of its inhabitants were taken into captivity and its church and oratory were destroyed.

The monastic character of the Ancient Irish Church has been often noted.\* It was in the monasteries and by them that the whole work of education was carried on, for the Bardic schools were the only other schools and they were not in the ninth and tenth centuries of much account, and were never an unmixed blessing†. In the monasteries the monk toiled and prayed; there were the churches, there lived the priests who ministered to the people outside, and there also was the bishop, whose episcopate was not yet diocesan, and whose jurisdiction was limited to the monastery and its immediate surroundings. When these monasteries were violently invaded, their schools destroyed, their books torn, or drowned, their scholars and teachers gone, their altars overthrown, or desecrated, their chalices turned into pagan drinking cups, their priests murdered, or at least dispersed, and hiding in woods and caves, the work of conserving and propagating the Christian religion became well nigh impossible and the danger seemed not remote that the light of the Gospel, which had burned so brilliantly and so long, was about to be finally extinguished. The material damage done to the churches was in many cases repaired, and it is difficult to know which to marvel at most—the grim persistence with which the Danes attacked the monasteries, or the equally remarkable persistence with which the Irish repaired them. But mere material damage was not the greatest injury done to the Irish Church. In the corruption of manners, the neglect of religion and the general demoralisation of the people, her wounds were deeper still. The whole energies of the people were turned to war, the fatal clan system, so fruitful of discord, still flourished, and the weapons which should have been turned against the invader were as often turned against each other. The quietness and the seclusion of monastic life soon lost their attractions for a warlike race; amid strife and bloodshed neither sanctity nor religion could flourish; even monks, forgetting that their vocation was one of peace, mingled in the fray, and not alone fought the invader

\* *Cambrensis Eversus*, Vol. III., p. 463. *Monks of the West*, Book VIII., chap 3.

† Douglas Hyde; *Literary History of Ireland*, p. 488.

but even fought each other.\* Reverence for monasteries and their inhabitants declined; and not once, but often, did a native and Christian chief plunder and rob as ruthlessly as the pagan Dane. During the ninth and tenth centuries, Clonmacnoise † was sacked and plundered by native chiefs no less than eight times, Armagh, Glendalough, Clooneenagh and Kildare once each; and the *Annals* record, at the year 848, that a native chief (Cinaedh, son of Conaing of Cianachta-Breagh) burned the oratory of Treoit, with two hundred and sixty persons who had sought shelter within its sacred walls.

St. Patrick has spoken with enthusiasm of the generosity of the Irish of his own time, how they came and cast upon the altar even their personal ornaments, though his love of poverty precluded him from accepting all their gifts. ‡ In succeeding ages the same generous spirit survived, Each chief felt proud to have a monastery on his territory which he generously endowed with land. The chief of Ely O'Carrol, for instance, gave his own residence for a monastery, || Turlogh of Thomond richly endowed Killaloe\*\* and such examples were not rare. Up to the coming of the Danes these monastic possessions were respected and, except in rare and isolated cases, did not excite the aggressive cupidity of the native chiefs. But the havoc wrought by foreign invasion and domestic strife weakened the influence of religion and the Church lands came to be regarded by many of the chiefs with a hungry eye. While they had a member of their own family in Holy Orders, who could act as abbot, they were content to let the monastery alone, †† but when the clerical vocation was not vouchsafed to one of their kindred, under the specious plea of guarding the monastery against the Danes, they boldly took possession of its lands and even assumed the name and exercised the authority of abbot. During the ninth century, there was a lay abbot at Ross. †† In many other monasteries the same system prevailed, and at Armagh, from the early part of the tenth century, there was for two centuries a succession of lay and married abbots, who presumed to act in the name of St. Patrick and with the authority of the primatial See. ||||

\* Reeves' *Adamnan*, p. 255. *The Four Masters* have suppressed these facts.

† *Four Masters*, at the years 831-2-4-44, 934-51-60.

‡ *Tripartite Life*, p. 367.

|| Lanigan, Vol. III., p. 24.

\*\* Harris's *Ware*, Vol. I., p. 590. His son, St. Flannan, was its first Bishop.

†† O'Hanlon, *Life of St. Malachy O'Morgair*, chap. 13.

‡‡ Healy, p. 493.

|||| *Cambrensis Eversus*, Vol. III., p. 404.



Such abuses as these indicate that the Irish Church had fallen on evil days. Yet her monasteries and schools struggled on, and with some measure of success. Suibne, who died (892), and was buried at Clonmacnoise, presumably one of its students or professors, is described by Florence of Worcester as the "wisest and greatest doctor of the Scots."\* Dicuil the geographer, as he is called, who lived in the same century, another scholar of Clonmacnoise, wrote an interesting and learned work on Geography ("De Mensura Orbis Terræ");† Cormac, who was at the same time King and Bishop of Cashel, wrote a glossary, well known to Irish scholars as "Cormac's Glossary," and showing that he knew besides Irish, Latin, Greek and Hebrew;‡ while Maelmurra and Flann and O'Hartigan and O'Flynn wrote works in Irish, some of which still remain.|| Maelmurra wrote a poem on the *Milesian Immigration*, published (1847), by the Irish Archæological Society. Nine or ten of O'Hartigan's poems remain, and of O'Flynn there are fourteen pieces remaining, containing eighteen hundred lines, and dealing with the whole early and mythical history of Ireland.\*\*

But if there are few illustrious names in the Irish schools at home, it was not so on the continent, where the reputation of the Irish for sanctity and scholarship was still maintained. During this period the Irish went abroad in crowds,†† some perhaps to indulge their curiosity, for the Irish had already acquired a reputation for rambling,‡‡ others because, in a country desolated by perpetual war, they could cultivate neither sanctity nor scholarship and sought for both in more favoured lands. Of this latter class was Dungal, an Irish exile (*Hibernicus Exul*), as he describes himself.|||| Besides his labours against the Iconoclasts, he established a school at Pavia, which soon became famous throughout Italy, and in the end of his life he retired to Bobbio, where he died (825). Donatus, scholar and poet, died Bishop of Fiesole (873).\*\*\* Other Irishmen were Marcellus and Eusebius, monks in St. Gall; Helcis, Bishop of Angouleme, Columbanus, a monk, who wrote some verses for Charles the Bald; another Columbanus, a century later, was a monk at Ghent (died 959),

\* Healy, p. 274. In Florence's *Chronicle* he is named Swifneh;

† *Ibid.*, p. 281.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 612. O'Curry's *MSS. Materials*, pp. 19, 20.

|| *Ibid.*, pp. 617-19.

\*\* Hyde's *Literary History*, pp. 427-30.

†† Olden; *The Church of Ireland*, pp. 172, 184.

‡‡ Lingard's *Anglo-Saxon Church*, Vol. II., p. 269, note.

|||| Lanigan, Vol. III., pp. 259-264.

\*\*\* *Ibid.*, pp. 282-3. On his tomb in the Cathedral verses written by himself were engraved,—he calls himself, "*Scotorum Sanguine cretus.*"

Patrick a monk at Glastonbury, which monastery was established by Irish monks and in which the great St. Dunstan was trained; and Irish monasteries existed also both at Cologne and Metz.\*

Among all the Irishmen abroad during this period the best known was John Scotus Erigena. The time of his birth, the place in Ireland in which he was born, the school or schools in which he studied, the time and place and manner of his death are all equally uncertain. Among the scholars of the ninth century he stood high, among the philosophers he was first, and at Rome, the variety and extent of his learning—"a barbarian from the ends of the earth"—was matter for the greatest wonder. † A resident at the court of Charles the Bald, a familiar and favourite of that monarch and head of the palace school, among the scholars around him so great was his learning, that he soon came to be called the Master, ‡ and when the controversy raised by Gottschalk on predestination arose, he undertook the refutation of Gottschalk's errors. || Unlike his countryman, Dungal, he relied too much on reason and had no great reverence for authority, nor can it be denied that the language of his *Capitula*, in reference to predestination, free will, the effects of original sin and eternal punishment, is at least ambiguous and difficult to acquit of error,\*\* and gave plausible excuse for the attacks

\* Lanigan, Vol. III., pp. 285-320, etc.

† Usher's *Sylloge*, No. 24. "Mirandum est quoque quomodo vir ille barbarus *qui in finibus mundi positus* talia intellectu capere in aliamque linguam transferre valuerit."

‡ Healy, p. 581. Lanigan, Vol. III., pp. 288 *et seq.*

|| Gottschalk was a monk at Fulda, and had been *compelled* to enter a monastery. He taught that some were predestined to eternal life and others to eternal death, and therefore that God had ordained some men to be saved, and others to be lost, a direct contradiction of the words of Scripture, that God wishes all men to be saved. (Alzog's *Church History*, Vol. II., p. 307.)

\*\* Usher's Works, Vol. IV., pp. 114, *et seq.* His proposition that foreknowledge and predestination are the same cannot be admitted. God does foresee that some will be saved and others lost, but the former will be saved by co-operating with grace and the proper exercise of their liberty, the latter will be lost by misusing their liberty, and failing to co-operate with grace. But this is not the same as to say, that some are eternally predestined to be saved and others to be lost. If foreknowledge and predestination in both these cases be the same, it would be to disregard merit and extinguish human liberty. Nor again can that proposition be admitted that, in eternal fire, there is no pain but the absence of felicity, *e.g.*, the loss of God. This is one element of what is suffered, but does not constitute all, for the fire itself burns and causes torture. And that proposition of Erigena is hard to understand that in the sin of Adam, instead of all men being tainted by it, what happened was that each individual will was concerned and participated individually in that sin—it looks like a denial of original sin.

of Florus and Prudentius.\* Their acrid criticisms have been justly censured by Dr. Healy, and are less remarkable for Christian charity than for coarse and even brutal invective, for such terms as "vain and garrulous man," "so-called scholar and learned," "inventor of lies" and others of a like character are simply abuse, utterly devoid of argument, as well as of good taste, and repel rather than attract conviction. At two councils Valence (855) and Langres (859) Scotus was condemned, but at the Synod of Tousey (860) that condemnation seems to have been revoked.† Scotus must have been able to explain what he wrote to the satisfaction of the assembled bishops, and perhaps he attached to his language a philosophic rather than a theologic‡ significance.

At the request of Charles the Bald, he translated from the Greek the works of Dionysius the Areopagite, which work also did not escape censure, though the language of Anastasius contrasts agreeably with that of Florus and Prudentius. He merely insinuates that the translation of Erigena was too literal and ascribes it to the translator's humility—not presuming to depart from the very words of the original. || The third and last work of Erigena was not a translation but an original work and was called "De Divisione Naturæ." In this he certainly erred—he was guilty of Pantheism, for throughout he identifies nature with God. His death is assigned to the year 875. Mosheim's judgment on him was, that "he was a great and excelling genius"\*\*\* and Lanigan's, that "he was a good philosopher but a bad theologian," and both judgments may be accepted as correct.

At the commencement of the eleventh century, after a long period of darkness, the clouds seemed to have rolled away and the prospect looked bright for Ireland and the Irish church. At last unity of government was established and one strong man—Brian Boru—governed the whole country. At Sulcoit and Scattery Island and Glenmama, he had taught the Danes the bitterness of defeat, and the Danish colonies at Limerick, Waterford, and Dublin were his obedient, even if unwilling, subjects. The native chiefs, no longer allowed to make war upon each other with the same recklessness as of old, stood in salutary

\* Florus was a deacon at Lyons: Prudentius was Bishop of Troyes; (Lanigan, Vol. III., p. 292.)

† Healy, p. 583.

‡ He was not in Holy Orders, and never studied theology. (Lanigan, Vol. III., p. 288.)

|| Usher's *Sylloge*, No. 24. Anastasius was Papal librarian at Rome.

\*\*\* Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History* (Murdoch and Soames), Vol. II., pp. 180, 224-5.



awe of his power, and Brian, victorious over all his enemies, was desirous to repair the ravages of long-continued war. For the twelve years he was Ardri he did much for religion and learning. "He sent professors and masters to teach wisdom and knowledge; and to buy books beyond the sea and the great ocean; because their writings and their books in every church and in every sanctuary where they were, were burned and thrown into water by the plunderers, from the beginning to the end; and Brian himself gave the price of learning and the price of books to every one separately who went on this service." He built many churches, and of these there are specially enumerated the churches of Inniscaltra and Killaloe, and the bell-tower of Tuam Grene.\* With regard to the church of Killaloe, the opinion of Petrie—and his opinions are never given without having good reason in their favour—is that, judging from the architecture, the church was built at a much earlier period—probably in the seventh century; and as to Inniscaltra, it was merely restored by Brian and the only part built in his day was the chancel arch.† Without adopting in full the panegyric of MacLiag, it may be admitted that Brian's efforts were not in vain, and that a revival in religion and learning did take place during the years that he ruled as supreme king.

It was only a temporary stemming of the tide, and after Clontarf, where Brian and so many members of his family perished, the condition of Ireland, like the relapsing sinner, became even worse than before. Nor was there any stage of her history more disastrous for the Irish Church than that long period of discord and anarchy, which followed Clontarf and lasted for one hundred and fifty years. O'Brien in Munster, O'Loughlin in Ulster, O'Connor in Connaught—each wished to be supreme—and, if they could not be supreme themselves, they were determined that no one else should, and so from age to age this ruinous struggle was carried on. The lesser chiefs imitated the greater, and the result was universal war. As the influence of the clergy diminished, that of the bards increased, and it was seldom used for the interests of peace. A bard's attachment was to his clan, his view did not reach beyond its limits, his talents were for personal panegyric or rude invective,‡ he roused his chief to war—and this was seldom necessary—by recounting the warlike deeds of his ancestors; the peaceful, he dubbed as cowards or sluggards, the warlike only deserving of praise; and to a people like the Irish, so much swayed by

\* *Wars of the Gael and Gall*, pp. 139-41.

† Petrie's *Round Towers*, pp. 281-2.

‡ Walker's *Historical Memoir of the Irish Bards*, pp. 30-141.

emotion, his appeals were irresistible. There must have been many who saw in slaughtered kinsmen and ruined homes the sad realities of war, and who sighed for a life of peace at home, but either the powerlessness to disobey a warlike chief, the fear of the bard's satire, or perhaps the vanity to receive his praises, were too much for them, and against their better judgment, they were borne along by the rushing tide. To the Danes were left the business of commerce and its profits, and what was said of them in a later age was at least as true in the eleventh and twelfth centuries—that the Irish knew no industry but war.\*

This long period of strife and turmoil was a time of bitter trial for the Church. In past centuries the plunder of churches and monasteries was left, except in some few cases, to the Danes, but this unholy work was now done by native chiefs; and when O'Brien invaded Ulster, or O'Connor went to Thomond, the *Annals* record that they spared neither churches nor territory on their march.† Within the century after Clontarf, Clonmacnoise was plundered six times, ‡ Armagh three times, || Kells and Ardraecan twice, and Derry and Glendalough once each, nor does this exhaust the list of churches that suffered by native hands. The Danes were weak, except at Dublin and Waterford, and, moreover, had become Christians, and since 1040, a Danish bishop was at Dublin;\*\* but though they had ceased to be pagans they had not ceased to be plunderers, and amongst other churches, they pillaged Ardraecan twice and Armagh once.††

Amid this wreck and ruin the monasteries still struggled on, some in a precarious condition, but others, such as Clonmacnoise, protected and endowed by Turlogh O'Connor, Lismore patronised by the O'Briens of Thomond and the MacCarthys of Desmond, and Derry, where O'Loughlin of Tyrone died—these, in the twelfth century, enjoyed a moderate degree of prosperity. The exodus of Irishmen to foreign lands still continued, and at Wurtzburgh, Fulda and Ratisbon were monasteries almost, if not exclusively, Irish.‡‡ At Fulda lived and died (1002), Marianus Scotus,||| who wrote a valuable chronicle in Latin, and at Ratisbon was another Marianus Scotus (died 1088), who wrote a learned Commentary on the Scriptures.\*\*\* At home,

\* Spenser's *View of the State of Ireland*.

† *Annals of Loch Ce* at 1101. *Four Masters*, 1121;

‡ *Four Masters*, 1023-44-50-60-95, 1129.

|| *Ibid.*, 1074-91, 1112, etc

\*\* *Harris's Ware*, Vol.

†† *Four Masters*, 1020:

‡‡ Lanigan, Vol. IV., p. 6

||| *Ibid.*, Vol. III., p. 447: Healy, p. 256:

\*\*\* *Ibid.*, Vol. IV., p. 4

also, there were some distinguished scholars, who wrote in Irish; Con O'Loughlin, a poet (died 1024) "a very distinguished scholar," says O'Curry; \* Flann, who wrote the *Synchronisms of Flann*, described as "the greatest scholar of his day†" and of whose poetry two thousand lines are to be found in the *Book of Leinster* alone; Thighernach, most accurate and reliable of all the Irish chroniclers; O'Malone (died 1123) who wrote the *Chronicon Scotorum*,‡ and last, though first in order of time, MacLiag (died 1016) who wrote the *Wars of the Gael and Gall*, a work inordinately and disagreeably verbose, full of bombast and exaggeration, but yet of enormous historic value. Lanigan states that foreign students still came to Ireland, though he can give but one solitary name. ||

But an oasis cannot conceal, it rather accentuates, the nakedness of the surrounding desert, nor can the partial prosperity of a few schools conceal the ruin that had fallen upon the Irish Church. The constant plunder of churches by Christian chiefs, aided by Christian soldiers, showed that the worst passions of the human heart were let loose and that religion had lost its power to control them. No Synods were held for more than three centuries—from the first coming of the Danes to the Synod of Fiad MacEngus (1115); the bishops, deprived of the revenues of the monastic lands, conferred Orders for money, and the *Annals* record (1055) that a pitched battle took place between the monks of Armagh and Kells in which many lives were lost, and again (in 1060) there was a battle between two rival factions for the Abbacy of Armagh.\* \* The salt had lost its savour; corruption, which perpetual war had engendered among the clergy, spread from the clergy to the people, and Lanfranc in his letters to Turlogh, King of Munster, and to the Danish King of Dublin; and again, Anselm to King Murtoigh, were able to accuse the Irish, that bishops were consecrated without Sees, that these bishops were guilty of simony, that marriages were contracted irregularly and within the prohibited degrees and that the abominable practice existed of men abandoning their wives, even exchanging wives, with consequent promis-

\* MSS. Materials, p. 9. It was this Con who with Corcran, an anchorite was entrusted with the government after Malachy's death (1022).

† Douglas Hyde's *Literary History*, p. 445. He was head teacher at Monasterboice and died in 1056.

‡ Healy, pp. 279 and 277.

|| Vol. III., p. 490. This student was Sulgenus, Bishop of St. David's.

\* \* *Annals of Loch Ce. The Four Masters* have omitted these entries, wishing no doubt to suppress facts, which show how little these monks had the spirit of their state; but they ought to have remembered they were writing history, and that it is the duty of the historian to tell the truth.



cuous intercourse.\* Lesser evils, but by no means light, were those mentioned by Gillebert, Bishop of Limerick, who in his capacity of Papal Legate, sought to establish uniformity of discipline and practice and wrote for the benefit of the clergy a tract "De Usu Ecclesiastico," and another "De Statu Ecclesiæ." He dwells much on the diversity of Orders, Masses and Offices, sought to persuade all to conform to the Roman office, and characterises as unbecoming and even schismatical, that a learned man in one Order would be an idiot and a layman in a church of a different Order.† Lanigan's remark is justified that Gillebert was but a shallow theologian,‡ for diversity of liturgy does not involve diversity of doctrine; there are still many Orders in the Church, and the offices of the regular differ from the secular clergy as well as among themselves, but such diversity does not amount to schism.

In the year 1132, Malachy O'Morgair—afterwards St. Malachy—became Archbishop of Armagh. Born in 1094, and educated at Armagh and Lismore, he became successively priest, vicar-general to Celsus, then Archbishop of Armagh, Abbot of Bangor, Bishop of Connor and Archbishop of Armagh, besides subsequently being Bishop of Down and Papal Legate. || Twice he went to Rome, where he was received by Innocent II. with the greatest respect.\*\* On these journeys he turned aside to Clairvaux, where he made the acquaintance and became the personal and attached friend of St. Bernard, in whose monastery and in whose arms he died (1148). St. Bernard wrote his life and it is in these pages that the picture of the Irish Church in the twelfth century is drawn in the most sombre colours. At Armagh, Malachy found that one powerful family had possessed that See for over two hundred years. Nine in succession—mostly laymen and married though educated††—had presumed to take the Primate's place, to appropriate the revenues and to have themselves recognised as Coarbs, or successors of St. Patrick.

\* Usher's *Sylloge*, Nos. 26, 27, and 35, 36.

† "Quid enim magis indecens aut *schismaticum* dici poterit quam doctissimum unius ordinis in alterius Ecclesia idiotam et laicum fieri." Usher's *Sylloge*, No. 30.

‡ Vol. IV., p. 29.

|| *Ibid.*, IV., pp. 59 *et seq.*

\*\* Opera omnia S. Bernardi (Ed. Mabillon), Vol. I., "De vita S. Malactiæ," p. 1493. Innocent appointed him Legate in place of Gillebert, who was old and feeble.

†† *De Vita Malachiæ*, p. 1483. The eight before Celsus were all married men. Dr. Hanmer further states that Celsus himself was married, that he died of great age, "and lyeth buried with his wife and children in the said church," a bold statement and evidently an untrue one, for the *Annals of Ulster* (1105), expressly states that Celsus on becoming

They did not, however, exercise episcopal functions,\* but employed a regularly consecrated bishop, who discharged the duties of the episcopal office. Even after the appointment of Malachy as Archbishop, one of these usurpers—Nigellus—took possession of the Bacal Jesu, or Crozier of St. Patrick, one of the insignia of the See of Armagh. It was said to have been given to St. Patrick by an angel,† it was carefully preserved and much venerated, and in St. Malachy's time was adorned with gold and precious stones. With this crozier Nigellus made his visitation throughout the various provinces and the stupid people (*stultus et insipiens*) recognised the possessor of St. Patrick's Crozier as his Successor, and paid to a usurper the honours and dues which should have been reserved for St. Malachy. In other churches and, perhaps, at Armagh, but subsidiary to the Coarb, there were other usurpers under the name of Herenachs.‡ Originally stewards of church property, though not always ecclesiastics, their possession of the lands became hereditary in process of time, but they were subject to the bishop or abbot, and had out of the lands to pay him certain rents and to be charged besides with the maintenance of the church. Taking advantage of the disorders that prevailed, they continued to remember only their hereditary rights to the lands, but their obligations they conveniently ignored; and we know that Armagh was left in part without a roof for a hundred and thirty years,|| that the monastery of Bangor ceased to exist,\*\* and that when St. Malachy, in his efforts to re-establish it, undertook the building of a stone church there, the herenach, presumably lest he might be called upon to fulfil his inherited obligations, incited the people to violence, telling them that they were Irish and not Gauls, and that a wooden church should be built as was done by their ancestors.†† Neither at Connor nor Armagh were the offices chanted by the clergy; there was no preaching, no confession; marriages were irregularly contracted; faith was dead, and the people were Christians in name, but pagans in reality.‡‡ Thwarted in all his efforts at reform, Malachy lived

Archbishop received Holy Orders on the feast of S. Adamnan (Sep. 23). He was of the family that had usurped Armagh, but S. Bernard in mentioning the eight *before* him plainly desires to exclude Celsus as being neither married nor without orders, *Vid.* Hanmer's Chronicle (*Ancient Irish Histories*, Vol. II., p. 203.)

\* Lanigan, Vol. IV., p. 82.

† *Obits and Martyrology of Christ Church—Introduction.*

‡ O'Hanlon's *Life of S. Malachy*, chap. 13.

|| Lanigan, Vol. IV., p. 77.

\*\* *Ibid.*, pp. 78, *et seq.*

†† *De Vita S. Malachiæ*, p. 1513.

‡‡ *Ibid.*, p. 1480.

for two years outside his episcopal city of Armagh, kept out forcibly by the lay usurpers, Maurice and Nigellus,\* and, when he entered the city, as a protection against violence, he was compelled to have an armed guard night and day.

It has been sometimes thought that St. Bernard's words are too strong, that the picture is overdrawn, and when the Irish are described as a barbarous people, a people without sanctity, and without law, a rude people, a nation of beasts rather than men, such language falls harshly upon an Irish ear. His language in reference to marriage is especially strong, but is rather the result of misconception than of knowledge, for it was not that there were no marriages in Ireland and therefore that concubinage was universal, but it was that in some cases and perhaps in many cases, marriages were contracted irregularly.† The time was long anterior to the Council of Trent, and in these days instead of the prescribed form of words by which the contract and sacrament of marriage is now entered into, there existed a custom in accordance with which a mutual promise of marriage was made (*sponsalia de presenti*), followed immediately by co-habitation, and this was recognised as marriage. But the Irish custom was to make the mutual promise in reference to a future marriage (*sponsalia de futuro*). These promises were made solemnly, in presence of witnesses, to the knowledge of the Church, with some religious ceremonies and the interchange of gifts. They were made by those qualified to contract marriage, they were not annulled by a subsequent marriage, or by any other impediment having arisen, and continuing in all their original efficacy, when the time appointed had expired, co-habitation ensued, the spouses became husband and wife, bethrothal passed into marriage—and such had been the declaration of two Popes—Alexander III. and Gregory II. Such a mode of contracting marriage was not usual in other countries, but it was thought sufficient in Ireland, and a contract having the sanction of religion, even though bound up with what was unusual and irregular, is entirely different from those illicit connections, which ignore religion altogether and are founded exclusively on the uncontrolled impulse of the passions. But the attempt to show that the other disorders spoken of did not exist, or that they should be confined to the North of Ireland, is vain. Almost the same indictment was made against Dublin by Lanfranc and St. Anselm.‡ Nor is it probable that Connaught and Munster and Meath were

\* *Vita Malachiæ*, p. 1484.

† Lanigan, Vol. IV., pp. 70, 71. This question is treated at some length by Dr. Lanigan and with his usual ability and knowledge.

‡ Usher's *Sylloge*.



any better, for these were the places which, for more than a century, had been the theatre of continued war. To the demoralising influence of constant war may be added the evil example of the kings and chiefs. Muirchertach of the Leather Cloaks, for instance, was the son of Nial Glunduff and his step-sister Gormfleth, for both husband and wife were children of the same mother—Maelmuire. Malachy, the rival of Brian Boru, was married firstly to a daughter of Olaf Cuaran\* and secondly to Gormfleth, Olaf's discarded wife, while Brian Boru himself had the same Gormfleth as his mistress. But the example of the Church, and above all of the Church of Armagh, was the most pernicious in its effects. The whole Church of Ireland looked up to Armagh for guidance and good example, and how could the members of the body be sound when the head itself was stricken with disease?† In such a Church—helpless, almost hopeless—robbed of its ancient beauty and its vigour, it were hard to recognise the once prosperous Church of St. Columbanus and St. Columba. The Irish Church of their day might be likened to a splendid vessel, equal to the most arduous voyage, and fearing neither wind nor tide; in the twelfth century she had become a battered hulk, aimlessly drifting on the sea.

Many and serious as these evils were, yet they will not establish the contention of those who, from the days of Ware and Usher to our own, have sought to prove that the Irish was an independent Church and refused its allegiance to the Church of Rome. A modern Church historian, who is not deficient either in ability or knowledge, has a theory which is all his own. He does not deny that the ancient Irish held Rome in great veneration, but he gravely assures us that they venerated Rome, not as the head of their church but rather as the burial place of Saints Peter and Paul.‡ Such a theory has the merit of novelty, but it can hardly be said to have the merit of truth. Ledwich|| is never sparing, either of assertion or speculation, and his speculations as to the Eastern origin of the Irish Church are as well founded as his positive assertion that there were differences of doctrine between the Irish and the Roman Church, for the only argument he brings forward in support of this view is that there were differences about the Paschal computation, a question which had no reference to doctrine at all. Usher's prejudices\*\* were as strong as those of Ledwich, but his learning and candour

\* Halliday's *Scandinavian Kingdom of Dublin*, pp. 77-79.

† *Vita Malachiæ*, p. 1483.

‡ Olden; *The Church of Ireland*, p. 96.

|| *Antiquities*, pp. 411-12.

\*\* Vol. IV., p. 319, "Of the Religion professed by the Ancient Irish." *vid.* also Harris's *Ware*, Vol. I., p. 30.

and honesty as a historian were much greater, and yet he can find no better argument than this—that the Pope had no spiritual jurisdiction in Ireland because, up to the time of Gillebert, there was no Papal Legate in Ireland; as if the presence of a Papal Legate were necessary to connect Ireland, in doctrine or even in discipline, with the Church of Rome. If this charge, or others of a like character, were true, it is remarkable that they were not made either by Lanfranc or Anselm or St. Bernard. Neither is it charged against any of the numerous Irishmen abroad,\* not even against Scotus Erigena against whom so many things have been said. If it were so, why should so many princes go as pilgrims to Rome—Sitric† (1040), Flaherty O'Neill (1030), Donogh O'Brien, (1060); why should they pay honour to a Church they did not recognise? The journey to Rome in these days was no light matter, but one full of difficulty and danger; and Pope Innocent compassionates St. Malachy on having made it.‡ If princes and bishops did go to Rome, it could hardly be to gratify idle curiosity, but rather to pay their respects to him who was head of their Church and who sat in St. Peter's chair.

With unbounded admiration St. Bernard speaks of St. Malachy and his labours in the work of reform.|| Even as Archbishop of Armagh he travelled on foot, suffering the extremes of cold and fatigue; like the good pastor, he was ready to lay down his life for his sheep. Knowing his danger but not fearing it, he stood in the midst of wolves; so little ambitious, that entreaty and almost force were necessary to make him accept the See of Armagh,\*\* but only on condition that, if he could reform the people there, he would be allowed to resign, which he did and was content with the small and obscure diocese of Down. Such exertions and such example as his could not but succeed, and both at Armagh and Connor the change he effected was great. The Roman customs in regard to the office were introduced, priests were ordained, churches built, confessions became frequent, the people came to the churches, irregular marriage and concubinage were replaced by lawful marriages, until at length it might be said "that which before was not my people now is my people."†† As Papal Legate he travelled over all parts of the country, settled many disputes among warring chiefs, and at Cork settled a dispute about the succession to that See.‡‡ At his death (1148),

\* Usher's *Sylloge*, No. 17.

† *Four Masters*.

‡ *Vita Malachiæ*, p. 1493.

|| *Vita Malachiæ*, p. 1489.

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 1483.

†† *Ibid.*, p. 1481.

‡‡ p. 1503.

the impress of his zeal was left on the whole Irish Church. Yet, disorders of such long standing cannot be cured in the life, or by the labours, of a single man, and while much had been done much remained yet to do.

So far back as the Synod of Rathbresil (1118), an attempt was made to evolve order out of chaos in church government and for the first time diocesan episcopacy was established. The number of sees was fixed at twenty-four exclusive of Dublin, which was still left under the jurisdiction of Canterbury. Waterford and Lismore, which had hitherto been subject to the same jurisdiction were made part of the Munster province and subject to the Archbishop of Cashel.\* No palliums were yet conferred on any Irish prelate, but both Armagh and Cashel were recognised and decreed to be Archiepiscopal Sees, Armagh having a primacy over all Ireland, while, over Leath Mogha, Cashel was supreme.† It was decreed that Church lands were to be respected and to be free from tribute, and while a blessing was pronounced on those who respected and observed the Synod's decrees, a curse was pronounced on those who should infringe them. Yet, so little were these decrees respected, that Turlogh O'Connor burned the churches of Cashel and Lismore (1121), and Emly (1123), and Conor O'Loughlin burned the church of Trim with a number of people assembled within it.‡ Other Synods were held—at Cashel (1134), and Innispatrick (1148), at the latter of which it was agreed that Malachy should proceed to Rome and beg the palliums for Armagh and Cashel, which so far had not been obtained. St. Malachy had, in the meantime, introduced the Cistercian Order into Ireland, and had built for them a monastery at Mellifont (1142).|| At the Synod of Kells (1152), Cardinal Paparo, who had been specially sent from Rome, conferred four palliums on the Archbishops of Armagh, Cashel, Dublin and Tuam; and so little was the number or boundaries of the dioceses fixed on at Rathbresil adhered to, that a new arrangement was made at Kells, and as many as thirty-eight dioceses were established.\*\* Tithes were ordered to be paid in 1154, but they were not paid up to the Synod of Cashel (1172), nor were the diocesan arrangements final, for at the Synod of Brigh-mac-Tighe (1158), another diocese was added—that of Derry: a further synod was held (1162) at Clane. These numerous synods in such rapid succession and in such marked contrast to the preceding

\* Lanigan, Vol. iv., pp. 42-3.

† This supremacy was one of honour and dignity rather than a conferring of jurisdiction over suffragan dioceses.

‡ Lanigan, Vol. iv., p. 55.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 128.

\*\* Lanigan, Vol. iv., p. 167.



ages, when no synods were held, indicate that the work of reform was being pushed on and that the bishops were earnest in their efforts, but it was easier to hold synods and make regulations than to put these regulations in force, nor could this be done while there were a number of turbulent chiefs for ever quarrelling with each other, making war a pastime and apparently caring little for the people of whom they were at once the torment and the curse. At the Anglo-Norman invasion the clan system, having long outgrown its time, still existed, and like the upas tree neither Church nor State could flourish beneath its poisoned shade.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### *Cultivation and Condition of the Art*

Giraldus Cambrensis and the Irish—Censures them in many things—Praises their skill in music—Illumination of Manuscripts—The Book of Kells—Their skill in metal work—Various shrines—The Tara Brooch—The Ardagh Chalice—The Cross of Cong—Architecture—Early stone buildings—Irish Romanesque—Cormac's Chapel—High Crosses—Defects of the sculptured figures—The Round Towers—Theories as to their origin and use—Petrie's conclusions.

WHEN Giraldus Cambrensis came to Ireland, in the wake of the Anglo-Norman adventurers,\* he found little to praise, and many things with which he found fault. The land of the country, its climate, most of all its people—one and all excited his displeasure and drew from him words of censure. Ireland he describes as a country of uneven surface, mountainous, boggy, wet, woody and marshy, truly a desert land.† Surrounded on all sides by the sea, unsheltered, open to all the winds that blew, it was subject to violent and frequent storms, the blast either bending or uprooting the trees, and, like all mountainous countries, generating and nourishing most abundant rains. Among its animals the partridge and pheasant were wanting; there were no goats; and the violent winds and frequent rains caused multitudes of bees to perish; and those which combated successfully the inclemency of the weather were killed by the poisonous yew tree, with which the woods of Ireland abounded. But it is when Giraldus comes to speak of the inhabitants of the country, that the violence and bitterness of his language is especially manifest. They were a rude people, a barbarous people, adulterous and incestuous, illegitimately born and

\* He came first in 1185 as Prince John's secretary. His real name was Gerald Barry or de Barri, but he is more frequently called by his Latin name as above—Cambrensis to denote that he was a native of Cambria—or Wales. He was born in Pembrokeshire. He wrote two works on Ireland. *The Topography and The Conquest of Ireland.*

† *Historical works of Giraldus* (Bohn's Ed.), p. 20:

married. They had not yet departed from the primitive habits of pastoral life, held agricultural labours in contempt, were averse to civil institutions and led the same life their fathers did in the woods and open pastures, neither willing to abandon their old habits nor learn anything new.\* They had no linen, no manufactures of woollens, no commerce nor any sort of mechanical arts.† They were barbarous in their dress, in the manner of wearing their hair and beards; secluded by the position of their country from civilised nations, they learned nothing and practised nothing but the barbarism in which they were born and bred, and which stuck to them like a second nature.‡ They lived like the beasts, knew nothing of the very rudiments of the faith, and were the most filthy people, and the most ignorant on the face of the earth.|| In reference to such a people and such a country, the question of Giraldus is not surprising—can any good come from Ireland? As well expect to suck honey from the rock or draw oil from the flint.\*\* It was evident that such a people were born into the world with a double dose of original sin, and the wonder is that the Fitzstephens and the Fitzgeralds and the De Burghos should care to live among such savages, or desire to be masters of a land, where nature had been so niggardly of its gifts.

The Arts which are cultivated and flourish among civilised nations could not be expected to be found, except in a rudimentary state, among a people so low in the scale of culture. And great is our surprise to learn—it is the testimony of Giraldus himself—that the Irish described as so rude, yet excelled all other nations in music, an art which, even among the fine arts themselves, may justly be called the queen.†† “The only thing,” he says, “to which I find that this people apply a commendable industry is playing upon musical instruments, in which they are incomparably more skilful than any other nation I have ever seen. For their modulation on these instruments, unlike that of the Britons to which I am accustomed, is not slow and harsh, but lively and rapid, while the harmony is both sweet and gay. It is astonishing that in so complex and rapid a movement of the fingers, the musical proportions can be preserved and that throughout the difficult modulations on their various instruments the harmony is completed with such a sweet velocity, so unequal

\* *Cambrensis*, p. 124.

† *Cambrensis Eversus*, Vol. II., pp. 167, *et seq.* Lynch, the author conclusively proves that Giraldus is wrong, and even contradicts himself.

‡ *Cambrensis*, pp. 125–6.

|| *Ibid.*, pp. 134–5.

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 6. Author's First Preface to the Topography.

†† *Cambrensis*, pp. 126–7. (*The Topography*, Chap. II.)



an equality, so discordant a concord, as if the chords sounded together fourths or fifths. They always begin from B flat and return to the same, that the whole may be completed under the sweetness of a pleasing sound. They enter into a movement and conclude it in so delicate a manner and play the little notes so sportively, under the blunter sounds of the base strings, enlivening with wanton levity or communicating a deeper internal sensation of pleasure, so that the perfection of their art appears in the concealment of it."

The influence of music is felt among all nations, and both savage and civilised man are at times under its potent spell. The wild war dance of the savage appears grotesque enough, and to ears attuned to the higher forms of music there is little which is pleasing in the beating of their cymbals and their drums. But even the savage of the African swamp, as he beats his tamtam, does so with a certain rhythm and regularity, and amid the clamour and noise the ear recognises a fixed order in the sounds; time is beaten though little of what we might call music is produced. Such rude beginnings are separated by an enormous interval of time and skill from the proficiency displayed by the Irish in the time of Giraldus. Nor could such proficiency be acquired suddenly, or in a single age, but must have been a slow and gradual development. At each stage, the distinction can be easily marked between the laborious efforts of industry and patience and the sudden and subtle inspirations of genius; but even genius cannot dispense with labour and patience, and such skill in music as the Irish had acquired was not, and could not be, the efforts of untutored genius. The fingers of the harpers \* acquired their dexterity by repeated efforts and by the rules and experience of the ages that had passed away; it was not in a day or in an age, that their ears were so attuned to melody, nor that they became possessed of that subtle faculty by which they so disciplined the various sounds of their harps, that they felt and excited emotion, that they soothed the sorrowing by their strains, or called forth the tear of grief, or assuaged the violence of passion, or awakened to life and gaiety the feeble and almost vanished remembrance of some long past scene.

Equally remarkable was the skill of the Irish in the art of illuminating manuscripts, but unlike their proficiency in music this had its origin in Christian times. The missionaries, who accompanied and surrounded St. Patrick, wanted books to carry on the work of their mission. The preacher wanted his copy of the Scriptures so as to teach the people who thronged

\* Giraldus has noted that the Irish only used two instruments—the harp and the tabor (p. 127.)

to hear him, for the most trained memory could hardly retain everything in the Sacred Volume, and to rely on memory alone would be to invite error and confusion. The priest, or bishop, wanted his ritual to administer the sacraments, and his missal to celebrate Mass, and as the country was rapidly converted from paganism these books should be rapidly multiplied. In the monasteries which were founded and to which schools were attached, not the least important part of the buildings was the Scriptorium, or writing-house, where the monks who were skilled in penmanship were constantly employed in making copies of the required books. The number of monasteries which sprang up so rapidly was considerable, so also was the number of scribes \* in each monastery, and the diligence and skill with which they worked was such, that they were able to keep pace with the growing demand. But to copy these sacred books, and to copy them plainly and legibly was not enough for these zealous men. The Scriptures were the inspired word of God, His wisdom conveyed to men through His appointed ministers. And if Solomon ransacked his own kingdom as well as others for materials and skill to decorate the Temple, was it not meet that something also should be done to decorate and ornament those works in which the wisdom of God was contained? Such at least was the view of those Irish monks, whose faith was so vivid, who considered it little what sacrifices they made in God's service, and for the advancement of His honour, and who, to obtain merit in His sight and secure their own salvation, practised mortifications and austerities, as intense and as difficult to human nature, as did the monks of the Egyptian desert. The beginning of the art of illumination may have come to Ireland from the East, perhaps from Constantinople, where the Byzantine style flourished, or, it may be, from North Italy,† but whithersoever it was brought, the art in Ireland grew and flourished with peculiarities and an excellence all its own; and the Irish illuminated manuscripts are easily distinguished from those of all other lands. The skins from which the parchments were made were sometimes finely polished, but often also were rough and uneven. The writing was done, not with sharp metallic pens, but with the quills of swans, geese and crows, and the inks used were of various colours, black, red, purple, violet, green and yellow, the permanency of the black and the brilliancy of the red being specially noticeable, The black was mixed with some gummy substance, which did

\* Of all these there was none more expert than St. Columba:

† Miss Stokes, *Early Christian Art in Ireland*, p. 9. Interlaced designs certainly characterise the early Christian Art of North Italy, (Stokes, p. 71.)

not sink into the parchment or fade; and the brilliancy of the red was not affected either by the heat of the sun or by the washing of the rain; defying both, it retained its original distinctive colour, and age but added to its beauty.\* The various colours are blended with artistic effect, and the page glowing with these colours is strikingly beautiful. But perhaps it is the lines and figures which most effectually challenge admiration. The Irish scribe had a firm hand, and a well trained eye, and in the lines and curves which are so numerous there is no trace of a swerve, nothing to denote but that these circles and lines had been drawn by the most accurate modern instruments of mathematics.† As we look at one of these illuminated pages, the variety of lines and curves, of spirals and interlacements, an animal in one place, the head of a fish in another, a human head in yet a third place, our curiosity is excited and baffled as to where the artist began and where he ended; figures, lines, circles, spirals and interlacements—all are before us with a completeness, an accuracy, a minuteness, lit up by a blaze of colours, blending so skilfully with those figures and with each other that even the trained artist is amazed at the skill displayed.

The most widely known and the most beautiful of these existing manuscripts is the *Book of Kells*. It is a copy of the four Gospels, and is said by some to be the work of St. Columba, who is well-known to have done much in copying, and who, by constant practice, attained considerable skill. But the evidence is overwhelming that the work is of a later date, perhaps of the eighth, or close of the seventh century. The words are those of St. Jerome's version, which had not come into use in Ireland until after the sixth century, and the perfection of the work is such, that it could hardly be reached so early as the sixth century. For such perfection would be reached only after the Church had conquered all its enemies and had settled down peacefully in its triumph, enabled to cultivate literature and art. Nor could St. Columba himself, active and zealous and hard-working missionary that he was, spare the time sufficient for such slow and painstaking work. His name has been associated with it—it was called the Gospel of Columcille—‡ because it was he who founded the monastery of Kells, and

\* Stokes. pp. 8, 9.

† Westwood, author of *Anglo-Saxon and Irish MSS.*, examined the *Book of Kells* for hours with a magnifying glass, and could discern not a single false line or irregular interlacement, and in a space of three quarters of an inch by a half inch in width he counted 158 interlacements (Douglas Hyde, *Literary History of Ireland*, p. 462.)

‡ Stokes, pp. 11, 12. Reeves' *Adamnan*, p. 328.



it was in that monastery that the manuscript was used. Its history, like the country to which it belongs, was chequered and eventful. In Kells it was covered by a costly shrine made of gold, or at least in which gold was used, and in the eleventh century it was stolen from the western sacristy of the monastery. Its shrine was taken away and the book itself was buried in the earth, where it was discovered and dug up, after two months and twenty days.\* The manuscript itself suffered little or no injury. It became subsequently the property of Archbishop Usher and after the Restoration it came with what remained of his library, "ex dono Caroli II," into the custody of Trinity College, Dublin, where it still remains "the admiration and astonishment of everyone who examines it."† It is a wonderful book. A cursory glance would declare that there was a redundancy of figures and lines and curves, a too great wealth of colour, a disorder and confusion even in its splendour. But a closer examination, and a minuter, will correct the falseness of this hasty judgment; and the more it is examined the greater appears its wealth of beauty—figures, lines and colouring are so skilfully blended, that it is amazing. There is no confusion, no disorder, at every fresh examination new beauties are revealed.‡ "Serpents, lizards, birds with legs and necks elongated and interlaced are found in every part of the great monogram page, while the human form is seen in four weird figures, whose bodies are entangled with those of birds and who are blowing trumpets, which instruments are elongated so as to entwine the musicians in their inextricable coils. Three angels bearing books and one holding a sceptre crowned by a trefoil in each hand are seen to rest with outspread wings upon the main line of the letter X, while in the centre of the P a man's face appears, bearded, but not aged, and above all, and as it were, emerging from a labyrinth of spiral lines, diverging and converging in endless succession, rises the veiled head of a woman." || A German scholar, Dr. Waagen of Berlin, has declared of the *Book of Kells* that "the ornamental pages, borders and initial letters exhibit such a rich variety of beautiful and peculiar designs, so admirable a taste in the arrangement of the colours, and such an uncommon perfection of finish, that one feels

\* *Four Masters* at the year 1006. "This was the principal relic of the western world on account of its singular cover."

† Reeve's *Adamnan*, p. 328. Whoever sees it and examines it will fully agree with Dr. Reeves.

‡ *Cambrensis*, p. 99. Giraldus thought it could not be done by man and, perhaps, was written by an angel.

|| Stokes, p. 15.

absolutely struck with amazement.”\* It is not the language of exaggeration to say that it is the most beautiful book in existence.

Working in metals was understood in Ireland, even before Christianity was introduced, but it was in Christian times and under the impulse of Christianity, that the art reached its highest excellence. The illuminated manuscript was the work of some pious monk, whose memory was revered and whose life and acts were considered in later times as the life and acts of a saint, and the book which came from his saintly hands, and was the product of his enthusiasm and his skill was a precious inheritance, deserving of the greatest care, and worthy of the most costly shrine. His bones, a lock of his hair, a tooth, a shred of the garments that he wore, the book from which he preached to the people, the staff which supported the tottering steps of his old age, the bell which called the people to his Mass, the crozier which he wielded as a bishop—such as these were objects of similar reverence and considered worthy of similar honor. And some of the finest metal work of those times were shrines for those saintly relics. In the eighth and ninth centuries, there were few, if any, of the principal churches in Ireland, which had not these costly shrines.† But the Northman came, with no love for the Church and no reverence for the shrine or its contents, but with much greed for the precious metals from which it was made. Evil example is easily and quickly copied. The native chief learned to commit sacrilege from the foreigner, and one by one the shrines disappeared. But there are still a few which survived those dark days and the equally dark days that followed—covers for books, covers for bells and for croziers, and, besides, vessels for the altar, such as chalices, and at least one notable cross, the well-known Cross of Cong.

In other countries books were splendidly bound,‡ but in Ireland they were considered, after the lapse of time, too sacred to be touched and were regarded in particular clans as pious heirlooms. Lying in its precious shrine, the book was committed to the custody of an important and respected member of the clan, whose family became its hereditary guardians; it was borne into battle by the order of the chief as an assurance that the writer of the book was assisting them by his prayers;

\* Westwood. *Anglo-Saxon and Irish MSS.*, p. 24. Westwood has reproduced a few whole pages from the *Book of Kells*, and in Trinity College may be seen many of the initial letters also, reproduced by a lady. The reproduction in each case is fresher and more vivid than the original, and is, no doubt, such as the original when fresh from the scribe's hands.

† Hyde's *Literary History*, p. 457.

‡ Stokes, p. 88.

and the chief of Tirconnell had such reverence for the cathach, or battle-book, which was preserved in his family, that he dreaded even if it were opened he was to be visited by some crushing calamity.\* These shrines were called Cumdachs. That of the Book of Durrow † has been lost and a special entry in the *Four Masters* records that the same fate befel the cumdach of the *Book of Kells*. But the shrine of St. Molaise still remains, and is in the Museum of Science and Art, Dublin. It was executed within the years 1001 to 1025, is formed of plates of bronze, oblong in shape; and the ornamental portions consist of plates of silver with gilt patterns, riveted to the bronze foundation. ‡ There is also the shrine of the Stowe missal, as well as that to contain the cathach or battle-book of the O'Donnells. Croziers, like books, were also sacred objects, had their special guardian and were carried into battle; and the belief in Hy-many was that when the crozier of St. Grellin was carried in the ranks of battle, the O'Kellys were certain of victory, for St. Grellin was aiding them in the fight. || The croziers were made of wood, but it is the metal ornamental covering in which they were, which challenges attention, in considering the metal-worker's art, and to what proficiency it had attained. There are in existence portions of the crozier of St. Dympna, of St. Colman of Kilmacduach and of St. Berach—the latter in the Museum of Science and Art, Dublin.\*\* Of bells, the oldest we have, the oldest specimen of metal work of any kind in Christian times, is St. Patrick's bell. It is rude in design and shape and entirely without ornament, nothing more than plates of iron joined by rivets and covered over on the inside with bronze which helped to give resonance to its sound. †† In the bronze bells of the tenth century, such as that of Cumasach, we have an example of a bell of cast bronze, the sound of which as well as the workmanship is separated from the bell of St. Patrick by a large interval of artistic skill. ‡‡ Like the books, these bells had their shrines made for them especially in the period extending from the tenth to the twelfth century, the shrine of St. Patrick's bell being manufactured between 1091 and 1105, a fact which is gathered from the inscription. |||| Brass, gold, silver, and precious stones are the materials employed; the ornamentation as in the illu-

\* Stokes, p. 89.

† The Book of Durrow itself is in Trinity College.

‡ Stokes, p. 91.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 101.

\*\* *Ibid.*, pp. 97–99.

†† Stokes, p. 58.

‡‡ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

|||| *Ibid.* p. 66.



minated manuscript being interlaced work ; and the skill with which the threads of silver and gold are interlaced, the fineness of their texture, the accuracy and skill with which the scribes art is reproduced in metal are admirable, and show to what a height of perfection the metal worker's art had reached.

Besides these croziers and bells and shrines, there are three other objects of Irish metal work which for beauty and finish can hardly be surpassed. These are the Tara Brooch, the Ardagh Chalice, and the Cross of Cong. The Tara Brooch is made of white bronze, a compound of copper and tin. The number and variety of its ornamented patterns of which seventy-six different kinds are perceived, the delicacy of the filigree work, the happy combination of ornaments of amber and enamels and translucent glass have caused Petrie to declare, that it is superior to any hitherto found in the variety of its ornaments and in the exquisite delicacy and perfection of its execution \* Of the same age, and even more elaborate in ornamentation is the Ardagh Chalice, dug up at Ardagh, in the last century, by a boy who was digging potatoes. The metals are gold, silver and bronze, its ornaments are of every kind peculiar to Irish Art—enamels, coloured glass, amber, the gold filigree work is shaped and drawn into every variety of form ; there are different varieties of birds in its designs ; there are other animal-forms as well ; there are dragon's heads ; and so cleverly are all these blended, that even the Tara brooch can hardly rival it in beauty, and among chalices of that, or any preceding age, it stands unsurpassed.† Of a later age—it can hardly be said of more matured beauty of design—is the Cross of Cong. It was made during the first half of the twelfth century during the reign of Turlough O'Connor. His genius in war had raised him from the obscure position of King of Connaught to be first among the kings of Ireland, and, pre-eminent in war, he was also ambitious to cultivate the arts of peace, and gathered around him some of the most skilled artists in metal work and stone. It was from the hands of one of these the Cross of Cong came. It was made to enshrine a portion of the true cross, was made for the Church of Tuam, and meant to be carried in processions, the ornamental cross being fixed on a long shaft and borne on high. The upright portion of the cross is thirty inches, the cross bar a little over eighteen inches, and the thickness is one and three quarter inches. The shaft rises from the mouth of an animal whose head rests on a spherical ball and this surmounts the socket in which was temporarily inserted in the long shaft

\* Stokes, pp. 76-77:

† *Ibid.*, pp. 82-88.

when the cross was carried in procession. The cross itself is made of oak, but it is the covering of the face and back and sides that excites admiration. Over the plates, which cover the wood, there is much gold filigree work, the carving and interlacing being distinctively Irish, and of many and beautiful patterns. Along the face were many jewels, thirteen of which still remain; at the central plate where the arms of the cross meet, is a boss surmounted by a convex crystal, and round the boss were four beads, two of which still remain. There are inscriptions asking for prayers for Turlogh O'Connor, the reigning King, for O'Duffy, the Archbishop of Tuam, and for O'Egan, the artist. The Cross, originally used at Tuam, was transferred to Cong by Roderick O'Connor. It was lost during the troubled times of the Reformation, and lay hidden during the long night of the penal times, until finally, in the nineteenth century, it was recovered, and now lies in the Museum of Science and Art, Dublin, where it can be seen.\* And those who see it and admire it can declare, that the metal workers of the present may with advantage sit at the feet of their ancestors, for they can learn much from those artists of the far distant past.

When St. Patrick came to Ireland, the arts of architecture and sculpture were but little cultivated by the inhabitants. The use of the stone chisel was understood and the inscriptions in ogham, show that it was used to carve inscriptions on stone. But these inscriptions are of the rudest character, and in building it was the same. Most of the houses, no doubt, were of wood and these have long since perished; and what remains of stone buildings are not many. A few forts, such as Dun Engus, Arran Islands, are the most remarkable. They have been called, and justly, Cyclopean buildings, for not even the Cyclops could have made any impression upon them. Mortar was not used, nor even grouting, and the stones, unpolished and uneven, are laid together so as to make walls enormously high and almost equally thick.† With the builders the chief consideration was strength and solidity; they built as it would seem for eternity. The walls of Dun Engus have lived through the changing scenes of more than two thousand years; wind and weather have not affected them; they are likely to live on, for nothing but an earthquake could overturn them. In speaking of the church built at Lindisfarne by Finian, its bishop, Bede says, that he built it of wood, after the manner of the

\* Stokes, pp. 107-109.

† The walls are twenty feet high and eighteen feet thick (Stokes *Building and Architecture*, p. 34.)

Irish,\* as if to indicate that the churches in Ireland were all built of wood. And when Malachy was building a stone church at Bangor, objection was made that they were Irish and not Gauls, and, therefore, in the Irish fashion, the church should be of wood. From these, and other such statements, it has been concluded that all the Irish churches were of wood, and that stone was never used. Such a conclusion is not just. Wood abounded in Ireland then ; its forests were large, timber was easily obtained, and with timber material a church was easily built, much easier than with stone, and hence timber was extensively used. But there were places where, on the contrary, timber was scarce and stones were plenty ; the material next to hand was employed, and as early as the days of St. Patrick there were churches of stone. These churches, modelled perhaps on a design introduced by St. Patrick himself, were simple in plan and all built on the same lines. They were quadrangular in shape, the largest being not more than sixty feet in length—that at Inchigoil in Lough Corrib was only thirty-five—the door and only door was on the west end, the chancel, when there was one, at the east end and connected with the nave by a semicircular arch. † There were no side aisles, no transepts, no apse, as in the Roman basilicas. The roof was often of wood covered with reeds, or straw, or shingles—in the smaller churches sometimes of stone. ‡ The windows were few and small, without glass, splayed internally, and sometimes were triangular headed, sometimes semicircular. || The doors were never arched, but instead were covered with a lintel, and were narrower at the top than at the bottom. The walls were faced with large stones, whose surfaces were made smooth ; in the centre was rubble, and in the course of time, grouting. The doors and windows, especially the doorways, were made with very large stones, the lintel being usually of great size. The lintel used in the doorway of the church at Kilmacduagh was nearly six feet long, thirty eight inches wide and twenty-one inches thick ; its weight must have been considerable, and the labour of placing it in position great. \*\* Such were the churches built in the sixth and seventh centuries, small compared to those of a later date, plain but strong, built to last, and without ornament of any

\* Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, Book III., chap. 25. "He made it (the church), not of stone but of hewn wood, and covered it with reeds ;" it was afterwards covered with plates of lead.

† Petrie. *Round Towers and Ancient Architecture of Ireland*, pp. 162-4.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 186-7.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 183.

\*\* Petrie, p. 176.



kind, if we except an attempt at architrave in one or two instances. Such were the churches of Inchigoill, of Ratass, near Tralee, of Our Lady's Church at Glendalough, of Fore in Westmeath, all built before the close of the seventh century, the first named, that at Inchigoill, having an inscription, which fixes the date of its construction as early as the days of St. Patrick.

These buildings exhibit Irish architecture in its infancy. It was not, perhaps, poverty that compelled the people to build in such simple fashion, nor could it be ignorance where the arts were so flourishing. With their attachment to the past and their veneration for the first Saints, it may have been a reluctance to change from the models given them. And such churches, where the view of the altar was uninterrupted and where the decorations that art supplies did not attract the attention of the worshippers nor turn their minds from their devotions, consoled well with a people whose piety was so remarkable and whose faith was so earnest and so intense. But this primitive simplicity could not last. There was much intercourse with the continent. The students, who flocked to the schools of Ireland, drew glowing pictures of the splendour of churches in foreign lands; the Irish, who went abroad, contrasted with a sigh their own rudely built churches with the products of Roman architecture; a spirit of emulation among the Irish was engendered, and as they acquired eminence in the illumination of manuscripts and in metal work and their fame as scholars was world wide, they also began to cultivate the arts of architecture and sculpture, and they did so with success. The doors, as well as the windows of the churches, began to be built with semicircular arches at the top, instead of the horizontal lintel, ornaments were employed, and in the doorways of the churches at Inniscaltra and Kildare, both of which are referred to the end of the eighth, or beginning of the ninth century, we have three concentric receding arches instead of one,\* we have ornamented columns zigzag, or chevron moulding, on the inner roof, or soffit, of one arch, while on another is some pattern taken from flowers.† The capitals of the columns are decorated with human heads, the bases of the columns are similarly decorated and the intricacy and skill with which the hair of these heads is joined together, plaited and interwoven, recall the ornaments of the illuminated manuscripts.‡ More varied in its decorations, perhaps also of a later date, is the chancel arch in the church at Glendalough.|| But a fatal check

\* Petrie, pp. 282-3. This was the doorway at Inniscaltra.

† *Ibid.*, p. 209.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 236. This was the doorway at Timahoe.

|| *Ibid.*, pp. 256-7. This was the Church of the Monastery.

was given to this advancement in decoration and design. When the Danes came, they everywhere attacked the churches, and instead of new and more beautiful churches being built the existing ones were destroyed, nor was it until the Danes themselves were vanquished, that the work of church building could be resumed.

There had been many changes in the meantime. The basilican churches had given place to the primitive Romanesque, and this again to a Romanesque style, more finished, more decorated, more complete. In France, in England, in Ireland and in Italy, the churches were all built on a Roman model,\* but the architecture of each country had its distinctive peculiarities, was modified by local surroundings, and was shaped in accordance with the tastes and genius of the people. And in each country the progress was gradual. In the chancel arch of the church at Killaloe, built probably by Brian Boru, there are concentric arches, the shafts of the columns from which these arches spring are cylindrical, and the capitals of the columns are ornamental;† more highly decorated is the doorway of the church at Freshford,‡ but the highest and most perfect type of Irish Romanesque is Cormac's Chapel, built on the Rock of Cashel. Nearly eight centuries have passed since it was completed—in the reign of Cormac MacCarthy, King of Cashel ||—and walls and doorways and windows and stone roof still remain, firm and uninjured, as little affected by storm and weather and the destroying influence of time as the rock upon which the church stands. It is not a large church, it is rather a royal chapel, as indicated by its name. It has neither aisles nor transepts, and, except two towers which are Norman looking in appearance, it has nothing but a nave and chancel, with the usual chancel arch as a connecting link. But it lacks nothing in multiplicity and variety of ornament. The openings are all arched with the rounded semicircular arch, resting on cylindrical columns; these openings consist of many concentric arches, that of one door having no less than five different ones; and doorways and windows and chancel arch are all decorated.\*\* The shafts of the columns are in some cases fluted; some of the arches have chevron mouldings, in another case it is a series of human heads, but the greatest diversity of ornamentation occurs in the capitals of the columns. There are animals of various kinds, interlaced

\* *Architecture—Classic and Early Christian* (Smith and Slater, Art Hand Books), pp. 203–223, *et seq.*

† Petrie, p. 283.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 285.

|| *Ibid.*, pp. 290–1. It was consecrated either in 1134 or 1135.

\*\* Miss Stokes, p. 77 (*Building and Architecture*.)

horse shoes, inverted truncated cones, one like the Ionic volute, grotesque heads—human and otherwise, and other ornamentations somewhat difficult to classify or describe.\* This diversity of ornament recalls, not the pattern, but rather the number of the decorations on the Tara brooch. The roof is vaulted, its construction showing considerable scientific skill, it was also frescoed, the colours of the frescoes being red, yellow, brown and white. Had Giraldus seen this beautiful church, he would hardly have spoken of the Irish as a barbarous people, and he would have learned that besides music they cultivated others of the fine arts and excelled in them.

In addition to the ornamentation on the doorways and windows of the churches, several other examples of ancient Irish sculpture remain. There are many Ogham inscribed stones, which belong to an earlier period; there are tombstones which are usually flat slabs laid upon the earth, there are pillar stones and altar stones, but the finest specimens of Irish sculpture are the High Crosses. Their age has been ascertained as extending from the tenth to the thirteenth century; their object was to commemorate some deed, or to be dedicated to the memory of some saint. Their form is that of the Latin Cross, the most characteristically Irish feature being the circle which in every case surrounds the arms of the cross. The faces and sides are divided into panels, each panel having a group of sculptured figures intended to illustrate some event in the Old or New Testament, or to impart some Christian lesson. On one of the crosses at Monasterboice, in the panels which have been so far deciphered, the subjects are the Fall of Man, the Expulsion from Eden, Adam Delves and Eve Spins, Cain killing Abel, the Magi, Michael and Satan at the weighing of Souls, and the Crucifixion and Last Judgment. On another Cross there were twenty-four panels, in only six of which the groups of figures have been deciphered; at Clonmacnoise, of twenty-four panels, just half of the groups can be made out, and at the Tuam Cross, on one side is the Crucifixion, on another the figure of a bishop, and on another panel a funeral procession.† Surrounding these panels and running along the sides and arms of the cross are various ornamentations—the interlaced lines, the divergent spirals, which are met with so often in manuscripts and on metal work, and which are produced on these stones with a fidelity, a delicacy, a lightness of touch, a happy combination of one with another, which could only come from the highest artistic skill.

\* Petrie, pp. 296–304.

† Stokes, pp. 18–22. (*Sculpture*.)



The sculptured figures themselves—bishops, abbots, kings, saints and angels are but rudely drawn, and it is here that the failure of the Irish sculptors is conspicuous. The artists knew little of human anatomy. The feet and hands are disproportioned, the figure awkward and ungainly, the features vague and ill-defined, the face without power—dull, inanimate and expressionless, where neither passion nor emotion are portrayed, and where we fail to read pride or power, or courage, or fear, or anguish, or despair. And the draperies are equally rude—ill-fashioned and ill-arranged—thrown carelessly upon the figure, without any sense of artistic fitness, or any lines of beauty in their folds. It is art in its infancy, where the shadows cast are grotesque, and the moving sentient human figure does not appear. But it is right to remember that the sculptor's object was to convey a religious lesson, to preach a sermon in stone, and not to portray the beauty and symmetry of the human form. To cause the naked human figure to exhibit its strength and proportions, the muscles of the body, the play of the features, the emotions with which it was stirred—they would have considered such a debasement of sculpture, a servile and unworthy copying of the pagans. Their art was directed and controlled and permeated by religion, it was its handmaiden, if necessary, even its slave. It was the lesson of the Crucifixion, of the Resurrection, of the Betrayal of Christ and the other scenes they drew, it was these lessons above all that they wished to teach. It was upon these scenes they wanted the spectators to fix their thoughts, and not upon the beauty of the separate sculptured figures; and, perhaps, the rude figures that they drew attained better the object they had before their minds, than if they had chiselled them with the genius of Phidias or Praxiteles.

But of all the works of stone, which have survived the wreck of ages, and whose appearance points to a far distant past, the most widely known, the most spoken of and written of, are the Round Towers. There is some diversity in the masonry of these buildings, for the roughly dressed stones of Lusk and Clondalkin, and their narrow, square-headed apertures separate them by a long interval from the round-arched and decorated openings of Timahoe and Ardmore.\* Some of these towers are now imperfect, but a good number still remain in their original condition, and among them there is some variation in the height, the highest—that of Lusk—being one hundred feet, while that of Turlough, in Mayo, is only seventy feet. The architectural features are the same throughout—a tall round

\* Miss Stokes, p. 51. (*Building and Architecture*..)

tower, pierced along its sides by a few narrow openings, and covered with a stone cone-like roof. It is, however, round the question as to what was the origin and uses of these buildings, that controversies have raged. Finding these structures different from any in other countries, and in Ireland itself, a survival of a long past age, the records of which in part at least have been lost, many have undertaken to say, when and for what purpose they were built, and each has his own peculiar theory to propound. In origin they were said to be Danish,\* or Phœnician, they were said to be fire temples,† or lofty heights from which the Druidical festivals were to be proclaimed, as the muezzin proclaims prayer from the minaret. They were said to be astronomical observatories, or phallic emblems, or Buddhist temples, or anchorite towers or penitential prisons, and lastly, they were belfries or monastic keeps, or watch-towers. Of these theories, some are ingenious, some are absurd, some are fanciful and arbitrary, most are sustained with learning and ability, and not a few are supported by great names. But neither by itself is satisfactory, and the problem as to when and why they were built, seemed to be as insoluble as the riddle of the sphinx. At last a man appeared, who had no theories to propound, who sought only for the truth, and who had many qualifications for the task he undertook. This was George Petrie, a man whose services to Irish Archaeology have been great, and whose name Ireland should always hold in honour. His tastes were antiquarian, his learning was extensive and profound; he knew the Irish language, and therefore could make use of ancient chronicles and records and decipher ancient inscriptions; architecture he was specially familiar with; he was patient and persevering, had no pre-conceived notions or theories, was well qualified to weigh and value arguments and reasons, and spared neither time nor labour. He visited these towers himself, examined their peculiarities—the style of their masonry and their architecture, and the buildings with which they were associated, sought out the various references to them in the oldest of the Irish books, and then, having exhausted every source from which light could be thrown upon the inquiry, he was prepared to pass judgment. The Danish origin of the Towers was easily disposed of, for the Danes, neither in Ireland or elsewhere, built much; their genius was rather for destruction, and their track was marked, not by the buildings they had erected, but by the ruins they had made. The theory

\* This is the opinion of Lynch in his *Cambrensis Eversus*, of Peter Walsh, of Dr. Molyneux, and of Ledwich (Petrie, pp. 5-10)

† This was Vallancey's opinion (Petrie, pp. 12, 13.,

that they were of Eastern origin. and were used as fire temples was that of Vallancey, a man, says Thomas Davis, "of little learning, little industry, great boldness, and no scruples," \* qualifications but ill suited for success in historical inquiry. His speculations are bold and reckless, his dissertations on the etymology of Irish words ridiculous, and his arguments without value; † and *his* theory may be safely discarded. Nor is Dr. Charles O'Connor convincing in *his* theory that they were astronomical towers, ‡ nor Harris and Usher in thinking that they were pillar towers such as that on which Simon Stylites lived; and the Phallic theory never had any support except, "in Henry O'Brien's enthusiastic ignorance."

Having disposed of all these and such like theories, Petrie's own judgment was that these towers were built when Ireland was harassed by the Danes, that they were therefore of Christian origin, that their main purpose was to serve as monastic keeps, where the precious vessels of the adjoining church were kept for safety and could be defended with ease, and that besides they served as belfries, and were also used as watch towers. And Petrie's reasons are strong and convincing. They are usually found in connexion with ecclesiastical buildings, || their architecture in doorways and windows is the same as these buildings and distinguishable from the various remains of Irish pagan architecture, and their value as keeps for sacred objects is apparent. The marauding Danes had special enmity to the churches, and were anxious to seize the sacred objects they contained—chalices, ciboriums, crosses, shrines, vestments and manuscripts. A monk placed on the summit of one of these towers, like the look-out on a vessel, or a sentinel on a watch-tower, could easily perceive the advancing foe and warn the inmates of his monastery; and when the Danes arrived

\* Davis's *Essays*, p. 67. Vallancey published these theories in his work "Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis."

† His conjectures have the appearance of being learned and profound, but their worthlessness and shallowness are exhaustively examined and exposed by Petrie (pp. 13–30). For instance, "the Hebrew word *gadul*, means *great*, and thence a tower; the Irish name for a round tower, *cloghad*, is from *gadul*, and *clogh*, a stone; and the Druids called every place of worship, *cloghad*." (Davis's *Essays*, p. 68.) Such guesses are aptly called childish by Davis.

‡ Dr. Lanigan (Vol. iv., pp. 406–8), in part follows Vallancey and in part Dr. O'Connor, for he thinks that the lower storey of the Towers would be used for fireworship and the higher for astronomical observation.

|| Dr. Lanigan's notion is that the Tower came first in pagan times and the church in Christian times, the purpose being to worship God in these places where formerly they worshipped the sun and fire. (Vol. iv., p. 408.)



the gold and silver of the church was beyond their reach. In the open the Danish battle-axe was a dangerous and effective weapon, but it was powerless against strong walls of stone; the masonry is not so easily detached in a round building as in a rectangular one, the windows were small, and being a long distance from the earth not easily reached, and even when an entrance to the tower was gained a series of successive assaults had to be made. For there were several stories, the defenders driven from one went to a higher, whence they could throw down stones on the heads of their assailants, or hurl darts at them as they advanced. Whoever will read Petrie's work will be struck by the learning of the author, and the skill with which he marshals his arguments, and he will conclude, if he is open to argument and conviction, that fanciful theories can be safely laid aside, and that Petrie has settled, once and forever, the long agitated question as to the origin and use of the Round Towers.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### *The Anglo-Norman Invasion.*

Leinster and its wars—Its King, Dermot MacMurrogh—His character—Took away the wife of O'Rorke of Breffni—Expelled from Leinster—Sought aid from Henry II.—The Normans and Anglo-Normans—First arrival of the Anglo-Normans in Ireland under Fitzstephen and Prendergast—Wexford captured—Ossory attacked—MacMurrogh and Roderick O'Connor—Arrival of Maurice Fitzgerald—Raymond Le Gros and Strongbow—Waterford captured—and Dublin—Death of MacMurrogh—Strongbow and Henry II.—The Dublin Danes—Roderick O'Connor besieges Dublin, but is defeated.

DURING the centuries that preceded the Danish invasion, the rivalries of Irish chiefs seemed endless, and each province was in turn the scene of bloodshed and strife and must have heavily suffered; but of all these provinces none suffered so much as Leinster which was seldom an aggressor and fought only to resist attack. Unjustly burdened with the Boru tribute, it paid only with reluctance and under compulsion, while successive Ardri exacted the imposition, with the infliction of much suffering on the tributary province. With an army they often entered Leinster and wasted and plundered it through its whole extent; at the battle of Allen (717) almost the whole population of Leinster was destroyed, and in 804, Aedh Ornaghe, the Ardri, with a large army of the laity and clergy,\* devastated Leinster twice in one month, and not content with getting his full demand from the Leinstermen, he wantonly entered that province, in the following year,

\* Up to that date the clergy were compelled to go to war and to fight as well as the laity, and on this occasion the whole clergy of Leath Cuin were with the Ardri—a strange occupation for the clergy it was. They complained of their grievance to the king and he referred the matter to Fotha, the Canonist, who wrote a poem by way of answer. He strongly advised the king to dispense with the attendance of the clergy, and hereafter they were not present in the battle as combatants. What seems strange is that Adamnan did not get them exempt in his day as he had done in the case of women. (*Four Masters*, Vol. I., p. 409.)

and cut it in two. The other provinces looked on while Leinster was thus harassed and overrun ; Leinster itself was overmatched in the unequal contest, and, driven to desperation, the Leinstermen sometimes allied themselves with the pagan Danes, and against those of their own country and faith. On some occasions they might be excused altogether or, at least, some palliation of their guilt might be discovered, but it is impossible not to condemn their attitude at Glenmama and, above all, at Clontarf. During the long period of discord that succeeded the fall of Brian, Leinster was no worse off than its neighbours, for all the provinces were wasted by constant war, all were reduced to the same equality, an equality of strife and bloodshed and misery ; Leinster was no longer the outcast it had been, the sport of succeeding Ardri. A time came when she attained pre-eminence herself ; and one of her kings—Dermot Maelnambo—was, in his time, the most powerful and the most feared among the Irish kings.

In the twelfth century, Leinster once more acquired unenviable notoriety, and was placed, in relation to the other provinces, in a position of isolation and antagonism ; and its king, MacMurrough, eclipsing the treachery of Maelmurra, has earned for himself in history the odious epithets of the renegade and the traitor. Becoming king in 1121, he gave hostages to Turlogh O'Connor in the following year,\* but a few years later (1128), he renounced his allegiance to the Connaught king. O'Connor was a dangerous man to provoke, and the desertion of Dermot was followed by the devastation of Leinster.† With O'Mellaghlin of Meath he was at war in 1136, and again, eight years later, when the kingdom of Meath was partitioned by O'Connor, MacMurrough getting a third of the province, as his share of the spoil. Again in alliance with Turlogh, he fought at the battle of Moanmore (1152), so disastrous to the arms of Thomond.‡ These alliances with the most powerful of the Irish kings, coupled with his own undoubted capacity, had enlarged the bounds of his hereditary possessions and consolidated the strength of Leinster under his own personal rule. Yet among his own people he was not popular ; he was more feared than loved ; and though the prestige of success won him followers, it did not win him their affection. The estimate of his character given by Irish writers cannot safely be accepted, for the memory of his treachery has roused their indignation, and the utterance of indignation is often the

\* *Four Masters*. He went into Turlogh's house in Meath, *i.e.*, while Turlogh was there on an expedition.

† *Ibid.* He plundered Leinster "far and wide."

‡ He was at war with Ossory and the Danes (1134) and with Waterford (1137).



utterance of injustice. But Cambrensis had no special reason for hating MacMurrough, or for heaping obloquy on his memory, yet his words are sufficiently strong and do not present Dermot in a favourable light. "Dermotius," he says, "was tall in stature and of large proportions, and being a great warrior and valiant in his nation, his voice had become hoarse by constantly shouting and raising his war-cry in battle. Bent more on inspiring fear than love, he oppressed his nobles though he advanced the lowly. A tyrant to his own people, he was hated by strangers; his hand was against every man and the hands of every man against him."\*

In the early part of his reign (1135), he had scandalized and outraged the moral and religious instincts of his subjects by his conduct towards the convent and abbess of Kildare. Forcibly entering the building, with a number of his followers, he dragged the abbess from her cloister, and, ignoring her tears and protestations and the entreaties of her nuns, he compelled her to marry one of his soldiers.† He lost the sympathy and even earned the hatred of the Leinster nobles (1141), by killing the lord of O'Felan and the chief of the O'Tooles and by killing, or blinding, seventeen other chiefs, besides others of inferior rank.‡ But the crime which brought him into conflict with the other Irish chiefs and which, more than anything else, has affixed a stain upon his memory was the taking away from her husband of Dervorgille,|| wife of Tighernan O'Rorke, King of Breffni. The lady was well past her fortieth year, while MacMurrough was at least twenty years older; both had therefore reached an age when the force and violence of youthful passion might have been moderated.\*\* But MacMurrough never knew what it was to impose restraint upon his passions, and it appears that the lady herself was not an unwilling victim, for she went in her husband's absence and she took with her all that she possessed in wealth. Not the

\* Giraldus Cambrensis, p. 196. (*The Conquest of Ireland*).

† *Annals of Clonmacnoise*. It appears that the servants of the convent and the townsmen of Kildare resisted him by force, for one hundred and seventy of them were slain by Dermot.

‡ *Four Masters*. It was not in open fight he killed these chiefs, for the *Four Masters* say that "he acted treacherously towards the chieftains of Leinster."

|| *Ibid.*, at the year 1152.

\* *Four Masters*, at the year 1193. (Note by O'Donovan.) Dervorgille was born in 1108, and was therefore forty-four years old, while Dermot was in the sixty-second year of his age. Dervorgille, besides her donations to Mellifont, built the "Church of the Nuns" at Clonmacnoise (1180) (*Annals of Clonmacnoise* at the year 1180.) The description which Regan (Dermot's secretary) gives of Dervorgille is that she was "a fair and lovely lady, entirely beloved of Dermot." (Harris's *Hibernica*, p. 11.)

least discreditable part of the affair was that she was acting with the knowledge and under the advice of her brother, O'Mellaghlin, King of Meath. O'Rorke appealed to his friend, Turlogh O'Connor, who led an army into Leinster (1153), defeated MacMurrough, and brought away Dervorgille and restored her to her husband. She did not, however, live further with him, but retired to the convent at Mellifont, where she spent forty years in penance, deploring her crime and lamenting that she had brought so many evils on her country. With O'Rorke the recollection of the wrong done him by MacMurrough was ever vivid, and once at least he entered Leinster and wreaked vengeance on the territory of his foe. But, without support, he could not hope to punish MacMurrough as he deserved. With the death of Turlogh O'Connor, his most powerful ally disappeared, and though Roderick, Turlogh's son, was his ally and friend, even more markedly than Turlogh had been, on the other side, MacMurrough was befriended and sustained by O'Loughlin of Tirowen; and against such a combination Roderick and O'Rorke were powerless. But when O'Loughlin was slain in battle (1166), and Roderick O'Connor became Ardri, O'Rorke's opportunity came, and he determined to chastise the ravisher by whom he had been so cruelly wronged. Aided by Roderick, he entered Leinster with a strong force. They were joined by MacTurkill, chief of the Dublin Danes—for they, too, hated Dermot—by the King of Ossory, and by the various Leinster chiefs, all anxious to be emancipated from his tyranny. Unable to cope with so many enemies, Dermot retired to the monastery of Ferns. He had hopes of obtaining assistance from at least one powerful Leinster chief—Morrough O'Byrne—and sent a monk from Ferns with a letter to that chief. But O'Byrne would give him no assistance; he willingly joined his numerous enemies, and Dermot, fearing if he remained at Ferns that he might be betrayed to the Ardri, and perhaps put to death, left Leinster and fled beyond the sea.\*

In his distress he went to England, hoping to win back his kingdom by the aid of that powerful monarch, Henry II., whose will was undisputed from the Tweed to the Pyrenees. On his arrival at Bristol (1168), Dermot learned that Henry was in France, and after a short stay at Bristol—in the house of one Robert Harding—he proceeded thither. He found the English monarch at Aquitaine, told him the story of his wrongs, how his vassals had all risen in revolt against him and driven him into exile; and he offered, if Henry would aid him in recovering his kingdom, to become his vassal and subject and serve him

\* Harris's *Hibernica*, p. 12. (Regan's narrative.)

faithfully during his life. With Aquitaine in revolt, Henry could not undertake an expedition into Ireland, or give Dermot the assistance which he sought, but he gave him letters authorising his subjects to give assistance, and, armed with these documents, the exiled King of Leinster returned to England, and to Bristol. To Richard de Clare, Earl of Pembroke, Dermot first appealed. A certain Richard de Clare, a Norman Count, had come over with the Conqueror, who appraised his services so highly, that he conferred upon him no less than one hundred and seventy-one manors in England.\* One of his descendants, Gilbert de Clare, obtaining the requisite licence from Henry I., gathered together a motley and mercenary army,† entered Wales and conquered the whole of Pembrokeshire, which he parcelled out among his followers. In his wars he got the name of Strongbow from his troops, and the name passed on to his descendants. By King Stephen he was much favoured and honoured and by him was created Earl of Strigul, near Chepstow, and subsequently (1140) Earl of Pembroke.‡ This Gilbert's son was Dermot's contemporary. He was reckless and extravagant, had wasted much of his ample patrimony, and, reduced to the position of the spendthrift and the gambler, was ready to embark on any expedition which might rehabilitate his fallen fortunes. And the prospect held out to him by Dermot was glittering, for he offered him his daughter in marriage and that he would give her the whole kingdom of Leinster, as her inheritance, so that Strongbow might hope to found a kingdom, as so many other Normans had done. But there was a difficulty. The friendship of his family for King Stephen did not recommend him to King Henry, but, on the contrary, caused him to be regarded with ill-favour and suspicion, and he dreaded to act on the general licence given to Dermot. He thought it safer to apply for and obtain a special licence to proceed to Ireland, but he bade Dermot be of good cheer; his vassals were many and as warlike and adventurous as himself—he might have added as greedy and as needy—and as soon as he got the necessary licence from the King, he was prepared with his followers to cross the sea without delay.|| Before leaving England, Dermot went to North Wales and engaged the services of a valiant knight, Robert FitzStephen.

\* Lingard's *History of England* (10 vols.), Vol I., p. 239:

† Composed of Normans, Flemings and English, the Flemings being specially distinguished as infantry. Thierry's *Norman Conquest*, Vol. II., pp. 17-18.

‡ *Cambrensis*, pp. 186-7:

|| *Hibernica*, p. 13:



He had been for some time detained a prisoner\* by the native Welsh prince, Rhys-ap-Griffith, but at Dermot's request he was allowed to go free, but only on condition that he was to leave Wales and proceed to Ireland, a promise which he readily made. Satisfied at the arrangements he had made, Dermot left England, at the close of the year, landed safely in Ireland, and secretly took up his residence at Ferns to await the arrival of his allies. As they delayed, perhaps longer than he expected, and certainly longer than he wished, Dermot, growing impatient, sent his secretary, Maurice Regan,† to Wales to announce to all that whoever would come to Ireland and aid the Leinster King in his wars would, if they wished to remain in Ireland, get lands to settle on, and if they were unwilling to remain, would get paid either in money or in cattle. These generous promises got support from many quarters, and the first contingent of the Anglo-Normans arrived early in the following year.

Little more than two centuries separate the age of Rollo from that of Strongbow, and in this interval the Normans had acquired immense power and influence throughout Europe. The whole of France from Flanders to Navarre was theirs; a Norman King ruled in Sicily, and England, their greatest possession, had been conquered for a hundred years. The change in their fortunes was not greater than the change in their manners; and if Rollo still lived he would scarce be able to recognise his descendants in the Normans of the Twelfth Century. The harsh accents of the North had given place to the softer speech of France, the pirate Norseman had ceased to exist; and the race that were unaccustomed to fight except on foot now disdained to enter battle except on horseback. The destroyers of manuscripts loved to patronise learning and encourage literature, the levellers of churches had become builders of churches: in Norman hands Romanesque architecture had acquired a beauty all its

\* He had been in prison for three years and according to Giraldus (p. 187) he was liberated on condition that he would assist Ap Griffith against Henry II., but he preferred going to Ireland.

† It was Regan who wrote that fragment of Irish History which is the first of those "Pieces relating to Ireland" inserted in Harris's *Hibernica*, and which begins with the expulsion of Dermot MacMurrough and ends with the siege of Limerick (1173), by Raymond le Gros and Meyler FitzHenry. By Dermot he was much trusted, and in return he has shown a tenderness for the unfortunate King's memory, and perhaps the severest censure upon Dermot is that his faithful friend and secretary has nothing to say in his praise. Less sparkling and animated than Giraldus, he has less vanity as well; he has little or no prejudice, his style is simple, plain and unadorned, he contents himself with stating facts, writes of what he saw and the people that he knew, and his narrative throughout has the stamp of candour and of truth. (*Hibernica*, Harris's Preface.)

own, and in strength and solidity, even in beauty and refinement, the products of Norman architecture might bear favourable comparison with the most splendid buildings in Europe.\* The rude barbarian, to whom pillage and plunder was a delight and to whom the tears of women were addressed in vain, had learned to become the champion of the oppressed and the weak, prided himself, and with justice, on his chivalry, was honoured if selected by some high-born woman to defend her cause, and freely entered the lists at jousts and tournaments, and as freely shed his blood, to earn her favour and her smiles. The votaries of Woden, who dreamt of Valhalla and its halls, and who hated Christianity because opposed to their pagan deities, had become the firmest defenders, the most resolute champions of the Church. In the first Crusade was a son of William the Conqueror; the Norman Knights, Bohemond and Tancred,† shone conspicuous by their heroic achievements in an army, where every man was brave, and besides these many were the Norman leaders, who left their castles and their lands to liberate Jerusalem from the Saracen. The Mahommedan power was broken in Sicily by the heroic and intrepid Roger, son of Guiscard, the island was restored to the jurisdiction of Rome, and its Norman rulers were styled hereditary and perpetual legates of the Apostolic See.‡ It was with the Pope's blessing William the Conqueror invaded England and Robert Guiscard won Naples from the schismatic Greeks; || and against Henry III. of Germany, the foe and persecutor of Gregory VII., Guiscard defended Rome.\*\* But while the Normans had thus changed in many things, their valour and skill in battle remained unchanged; and never was the battle-axe of the Northman more dreaded than the lance of the Norman. On many a field and against heavy odds, that redoubtable lance turned the tide of battle, for, "in a martial age the Normans might claim the palm of valour and glorious achievement." Under William of Hautville, in Sicily (1038), 500 Normans routed no less than 60,000 Saracens,†† and, two years later, the same number of Greeks were defeated in Apulia by 700 horse and 500 foot; but it seems incredible, though it is gravely related, that in the war in Sicily (1069-90), 50,000 Saracens fled before 136 Normans.‡‡

\* *Classic and Early Christian Architecture* (Smith and Slater), p. 231.

† Gibbon, Vol. IV., p. 220.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

|| Gibbon, Vol. IV., pp. 138-9.

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 151.

†† *Ibid.*, p. 132.

‡‡ *Ibid.*, p. 142. Gibbon sneeringly adds "without reckoning St. George, who fought on horseback in the foremost ranks."

A century in England had not much changed these Normans. They were as brave and daring as their kinsmen on the Continent, loved change and adventure, and were ready to embark on any enterprise which promised the excitement of war and conquest. Their arms, their armour, their method of fighting were the same. Their troops were of two kinds—knights and archers—the former always fighting on horseback, the archers usually on foot. These knights are sometimes called men-at-arms and sometimes gentlemen of service.\* The warriors of the Crusades received the sword and lance, the shield and banner of a knight with much solemnity, in which the religious ceremonies were not the least important part.† Compared with these and restricting the term knight to those who had passed through all these forms, the followers of Strongbow and FitzStephen were not entitled to the name. But the term had been extended, and, in England especially, had received a new significance and was applied to those vassals, who, in accordance with the system established by William the Conqueror, held their lands by military tenure.‡ They were bound to aid their master in his wars, to equip and maintain for his service a certain number of horsemen fully armed, and to serve him in the field as a knight. These men-at-arms or knights who came to Ireland were all of good birth, some in possession of lands, some who had forfeited the lands they once possessed, others the sons of those who held lands by knight's service, others merely adventurers, ready to embark in any cause, however desperate, others, like Mountmaurice, rather a spy than a soldier, "who was a man of fallen fortunes and had neither arms nor money."|| Besides what attendants he had on foot, each knight went into battle with at least two attendants on horseback, not clothed in armour like himself, from head to foot, but only partially armour-clad and trained to fight like their master on horseback.

In May, 1169, Dermot's hopes of obtaining English aid were realised, for at that date, Robert FitzStephen arrived in Ireland bringing with him a small army of near four hundred men—thirty knights, or men-at-arms, twice that number of horsemen in half armour, and 300 archers, or footmen. Transported in three vessels they landed at Bannow, in Wexford, the following day; at the same place Maurice de Prendergast arrived bringing with him, in two vessels, ten knights and a large number of

\* Cambrensis, pp. 202-3, note: (*Conquest of Ireland*.)

† *The Normans (Story of the Nations)* pp. 157-67. Before being invested the candidate went to confession and received Holy Communion, heard Mass and also a sermon.

‡ Lingard's *History of England*, Vol. I., pp. 240-1:

|| Cambrensis, p. 189.



archers.\* The whole force, which must have numbered between 600 and 700 fighting men, was under the supreme command of FitzStephen, but associated with him was de Prendergast, Meyler FitzHenry, Henry or Hervey de Mountmaurice, and Meyler Fitz-David, "son to the Bishop of St. David's."† The news was quickly conveyed to Dermot in his retreat at Ferns, and, mustering some 500 Irish troops, he joined his forces with the invaders, and the whole army thus composed marched to the attack of Wexford. The town was garrisoned by 2000 men, who, when they heard of the approach of the enemy, boldly marched forth to meet them, but when they saw the Anglo-Normans, clothed in complete armour and mounted on heavy Flemish horses, also covered with armour, they wisely judged it was useless to contend in the open against such foes, and that battle-axe and shield were unevenly matched against lance and coat of mail. The town was surrounded by a wall with towers and battlements; behind the shelter of these fortifications they could more effectually defend themselves, and, burning the suburbs, they retired within the town itself. The English advanced to the walls, which they gallantly assaulted, but the defenders cast down stones and beams on their heads, and they had to retire with the loss of eighteen of their number killed, while the Irish lost but three. In a second assault they were not more successful; but the Wexfordmen knew that these assaults would be repeated, they seemed to have lost confidence in themselves and to quickly get weary of the struggle; on the advice of two bishops, who happened to be in the town, negotiations were opened between the besieged and the besiegers; the town was delivered to Dermot and the townsmen swore fealty to him and delivered four of their chief men as hostages. And so pleased was he with his English allies, that he gave the town of Wexford over to FitzStephen, some adjoining lands to de Prendergast, and a district between Wexford and Waterford to Mountmaurice.‡ Elated by his success, strong in the strength and superiority of his allies, his ranks swelled by the Wexford men, whose accession brought the number of his army up to 3000 men, Dermot felt secure of recovering all he had lost and hoped even to be revenged on his foes, nor was his desire to recover his lost kingdom more intense than his thirst for revenge.

Against Donogh, King of Ossory, he was specially embittered. That prince had deserted him in his time of trial, he had joined the ranks of the enemies that encompassed him—O'Rorke, O'Connor, and others—and, what was still harder

\* Cambrensis, pp. 189-90.

† *Hibernica*, p. 16. (Regan's narrative.)

‡ Cambrensis, pp. 191-2.

to be borne, he had taken prisoner his only legitimate son and heir, Enna, and he had cruelly put out his eyes.\* Dermot proposed to his English allies that Ossory be attacked, nor had they any hesitation in carrying out his wishes. They were his soldiers, they had come to do his work, they were receiving his pay and it did not concern them who was attacked, nor would they hesitate to fight with Dermot's greatest enemy if they received higher pay.† Accompanied by his illegitimate son, Donal Kavanagh, his 3000 Irish troops and all his foreign auxiliaries, Dermot soon entered Ossory. Wisely avoiding an encounter in the open, the Ossorymen drew the invaders into the woods and bogs, they dug deep trenches and planted them with hedges, and when attacked they resisted the whole strength of the invading army from morning till night, nor was it except through his English allies, that Dermot gained a partial and doubtful, though bloody, victory. Nor did he think it safe to advance further into Ossory, on the contrary he thought it safer to return, and so little were the Ossorymen dismayed, that at a certain pass through which Dermot's army was retiring, they were attacked by the King of Ossory with 2000 men. At first the assailants were successful, and the Irish troops of Dermot fled for shelter to the woods, but the English gradually fell back from the marshy ground, where they were attacked, to ground of a harder nature, the Ossorymen impetuously pursued, when suddenly FitzStephen and his followers turned on their pursuers and with his men-at-arms rode down upon them, killing many with their long lances. Dermot's men hiding in the woods plucked up courage, issued from their hiding places, fell upon the wavering and retreating Ossorymen and killed many whom the lances of the English had spared. Over two hundred heads of his foes were collected and laid at Dermot's feet.‡ Recognising among them the head of one he mortally hated, he took it up by the ears and hair and "tore the nostrils and lips in a most savage and inhuman manner."|| This incident is recorded by Giraldus, but suppressed by Regan, whose love for his old master seems to have been greater than his love of truth. On his return to Ferns, Dermot received the submission of many of the Leinster chiefs, who saw his increase of power and dreaded incurring his wrath. Neither O'Toole nor O'Felan would submit, and Dermot, entering their territories, spoiled and wasted them and returned to Ferns, laden with spoil.

\* *Four Masters*, at the year 1168. Donogh is sometimes called Magillapack and sometimes FitzPatrick.

† *Hibernica*, p. 15.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 17: Regan gives the exact number—220;

|| Cambrensis, p. 193.

All this pleased Dermot ; but Ossory was still unsubdued, and he would not rest satisfied until his old enemy, Donogh, was utterly destroyed ; and once more mustering all his strength, English and Wexford men combined, he entered Ossory. Donogh pursued his usual skilful tactics, fled before the invaders and at a place called Hatchdrift, dug trenches, which he manned with his best troops. The Wexfordmen, "with much courage," led the attack on Dermot's side, but the Ossorymen were equally brave, and for three days the battle continued, nor was it until the English were able to intervene that the trenches were captured and the Ossorymen driven back. They retreated further still into Ossory; Dermot and his allies were afraid to pursue them, and again, preying and spoiling the country through which they passed, Dermot returned to Ferns. But Donogh of Ossory had not yet submitted and Dermot's own conduct did not promise further success. His arrogance, it appears, kept pace with his victories ; he offended some of his English allies ; and Prendergast especially was so disgusted with his conduct, that with his 200 soldiers he marched to Wexford, and resolved to return to Wales. The Wexfordmen, by orders of Dermot, stayed his progress at the port, and, unable to embark, he passed over with his troops to the service of Donogh of Ossory, and with him made incursions into Dermot's territories, and subsequently reduced O'More of Leix in subjection to Ossory. These services of Prendergast were but ill-requited in Ossory ; he received but little thanks ; treachery even was meditated against him; and, displeased with the service he was engaged in, and disgusted with those whom he served, he made his way to Waterford and passed over to England.\*

During the progress of these events, Roderick O'Connor remained inactive. Without any of his father's energy of character or capacity, he failed to appreciate the significance of what was taking place, regarded those new invaders merely as mercenaries of Dermot, employed by him to fight his battles, as in other days and by other chiefs the Danes had been employed. But when all Leinster was overrun; when O'Felan and O'Toole were plundered and Ossory was laid waste, his torpid energy was roused ; he appealed to the princes and chiefs; war was resolved against Dermot, and Roderick found himself at the head of a

\* *Hibernica*, pp. 192-3. Perhaps one of the reasons for Prendergast's being displeased with Dermot may be that he had transferred, either in whole or in part, the land he formerly assigned to him near Wexford to Maurice FitzGerald. In Giraldus (p. 192) it is said that he gave Wexford to FitzStephen and Maurice, which must be Maurice de Prendergast, as FitzGerald had not yet arrived, while in Regan it is said he gave Wexford to FitzStephen, and the Corrig, near Wexford, to FitzGerald.



large army. Yet, instead of fighting he commenced to negotiate. The elaborate speeches made by Dermot, FitzStephen and Roderick, as recorded by Giraldus, need not be included in a sober narrative of facts, but amid the mass of rhetoric and declamation, we can discern that Roderick offered presents and money to FitzStephen if he would leave Ireland—a thing which FitzStephen refused to do—that, failing in this, he made terms with Dermot, recognising him as King of Leinster, Dermot, on his side, acknowledging Roderick as Ardri, and giving him his son Conor as a hostage. There was further a secret treaty between them that Dermot would send away his new allies, as soon as possible.\* This treaty Dermot had no intention of keeping; his anxiety was to ward off the danger that menaced him; and so far from sending away his allies was he, that he warmly welcomed a fresh band of near 200, who had landed at Wexford under Maurice FitzGerald.† He encouraged his son-in-law, Donal O'Brien of Desmond, to throw off his allegiance to the Ardri, and when Roderick attacked his rebellious vassal and entered his territory with an army, the rebel was aided by FitzStephen and the Anglo-Normans, and he was driven back to Connaught, defeated and disgraced.‡

Dermot was not yet satisfied, and, rejoicing that he had deluded and weakened the Ardri, he began to hope that he might become Ardri himself. For this design he wanted more help from England, and sent an urgent request to Strongbow to hasten his coming. "We have watched (he says), the storks and the swallows; the summer birds have come and are gone again with the southerly wind; but neither winds from the east or the west have brought us your much desired and long expected presence || . . . ." The swallow had deferred his flight, but it was not his fault. Repeatedly, Strongbow had asked for the necessary permission from Henry II. but so far had not obtained it, and as soon as he did, he wrote to Dermot that he was making all necessary preparations for his departure and would soon be with him. In the meantime he sent his friend, Raymond Le Gros (May, 1170) with a small force—10 men-at-arms and 70 archers.\*\* He landed at Dundonald, a few

\* Cambrensis, pp. 195-202.

† *Ibid.*, 203. FitzGerald was half brother to FitzStephen and had with him 10 men-at-arms, 30 mounted retainers and 100 archers and foot soldiers.

‡ *Ibid.*, 204.

|| Cambrensis, p. 205. The thoughts of this letter may be (and this is unlikely) the thoughts of Dermot, but assuredly the words are the words of Giraldus.

\*\* *Ibid.*, 206.

miles from Waterford,\* where he was soon besieged by an army of 3000—the men of Waterford and Ossory.† He had been joined by Hervey de Mountmaurice and one or two other knights, but his whole forces scarce numbered one hundred. He had taken the precaution of fortifying his position, and he had gathered within the enclosure a large number of cattle from the surrounding lands. When the enemy assailed him, he opened the gates, drove out the cattle, followed with his troops and fell upon the broken and disordered ranks of the Irish, killing a large number of them‡ and taking seventy prisoners. The unfortunate prisoners had their limbs first broken in pieces and then, while they were yet living, were hurled headlong into the sea from the neighbouring cliffs. || Raymond stayed at Dundonald until the arrival of Strongbow.

On the 27th August following, Strongbow with 1600 men, of whom 200 were men-at-arms, landed at Waterford and, being joined by Raymond and his small army, with his whole force he attacked Waterford. The assault was twice repulsed, but through the skill of Raymond Le Gros\*\* a breach was made in the walls and the invaders entered the town and slaughtered the inhabitants without mercy. The Danish rulers of the city retreated into Reginald's tower, where they long and gallantly resisted, but the place was ultimately captured and both chiefs were put to death.†† News of these events quickly reached Dermot, nor did he delay, until he arrived at Waterford, bringing with him his daughter Eva, Strongbow's destined bride. The nuptials were celebrated amid unusual surroundings. The streets ran red with the blood of its citizens, all around were scenes of death and slaughter, and in this city, stricken with sorrow, a city of death and mourning and lamentation, the marriage of Strongbow and Eva MacMurrough took place. Leaving a garrison at Waterford, Dermot and his son-in-law marched north to Ferns, where their delay was but short and, then, gathering all their forces, they proceeded northwards, through the mountains of Wicklow, to attack the city of Dublin. No resistance was offered to their advance, and the affrighted citizens of Dublin soon beheld the banners of the invaders waving outside the walls of the city.‡‡

\* Cambrensis: The place was eight miles from Waterford and twelve from Wexford

† *Hibernica*, p. 23.

‡ Regan says that 1000 were killed in battle:

|| Giraldus (p. 211) puts the blame for this inhuman conduct on Mountmaurice, and says that Raymond was for mercy:

\*\* Cambrensis, p. 212.

†† Regan (p. 24) calls them Reginald and Smorth; Giraldus calls them the two Sitrics.

‡‡ *Hibernica*, p. 25.

Against an army which included nearly 5000 English troops\* and in which the number of Irish must have been much greater, the citizens had little prospect of being able to defend themselves. And if the city were taken by force, they had reason to dread the wrath of Dermot. They had hated his father ; while sitting in a court of justice in the city a party of them had murdered him, and to his dead body they had tied the body of a dog, and the dead dog and the dead King were buried together. Such an outrage Dermot was not likely to forget and would be likely to avenge. Negotiations were opened, the citizens' representative being the Archbishop of Dublin—Laurence O'Toole—Dermot's representative being Maurice Regan.† But while the terms of surrender were being settled, two parties of the English, one under Milo de Cogan and the other under Raymond, "eager for fight and greedy of plunder," forced their way into the city and put many persons to death. Strongbow and Dermot with their forces soon followed, while the Danish ruler of the city and many with him escaped to their ships.‡ Once again Dublin was in Dermot's hands, but not content with all he had done he made an irruption into Meath and plundered and wasted the territory of O'Rorke. Roderick O'Connor reminded him that his conduct in this and other matters was in direct violation of his promises, and that if he did not desist he would put to death his son, whom he held as a hostage. Dermot's reply was that he meditated conquering Connaught, as he had already conquered Leinster, and immediately Roderick put the young prince to death. || What retaliatory measures Dermot would have taken it is impossible to say ; the time was not given him, for in the winter of that year he died at his castle at Ferns. His enemies declared that he died of a loathsome disease, but others say that his end was peaceful and his death that of a repentant Christian ; his secretary merely records that he died.\*\*

Since his arrival at Waterford everything had prospered with Strongbow. After Dermot's death, by the double right of inheritance and conquest, all Leinster was his ; *de jure* as well as *de facto*, he was its king though he did not assume the title ;

\* Regan gives the numbers—700 under Cogan, 800 under Raymond and 3000 under Strongbow.

† *Hibernica*, p. 26. Regan says nothing about Laurence O'Toole, while Giraldus makes no mention of Maurice Regan (pp. 213-14.)

‡ *Cambrensis*, p. 214. The author says they sailed to the "northern islands" to seek aid from their kindred there.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 215. The *Four Masters* say he was "heir-apparent of Leinster."

\*\* *Hibernica*, p. 26: *Four Masters and Annals of Clonmacnoise*: Vid: *Four Masters*. 1182, note.



he divided its lands among his followers, nor did there seem to be anything to oppose his becoming master of all Ireland, as he was already master of Leinster. These fair prospects were soon darkened, and the gathering clouds on the horizon indicated that a storm was near. At Dermot's death hardly any of the Leinster chiefs would recognise Strongbow as his successor, nor acquiesce in the arrangement by which the succession was transmitted, especially as it was transmitted to a stranger.\* The trouble from Henry II. of England was even more to be feared. For Strongbow and his knights to acquire estates in Ireland he had no objection, but the rapidity and extent of their success alarmed him; he was intensely jealous, wished to grasp all power in his own hands, and viewed with disfavour and even with anger the prospect of one of his subjects setting up in Ireland a kingdom, which one day might be a menace to his throne. Immediately he proclaimed that no ship sailing from any part of his dominions should carry anything to Ireland, and that all his subjects in that kingdom should return before the next Easter, on pain of forfeiting their lands and being banished for ever from his kingdom.† Nor was this all. The Irish chiefs had for the moment suspended their quarrels; from all quarters they had come together, seeing the danger with which they were threatened, and under the supreme command of the Ardri—Roderick—30,000 fighting men were marshalled round the walls of Dublin. To make Strongbow's position more hopeless still, the Irish had applied for aid to Godred, King of Man, the appeal was hearkened to, and Godred with 30 ships had already cast anchor at the mouth of the Liffey, blockaded the city from the sea, and thus were the invaders effectually besieged, both by sea and land. It was said that this formidable attack had been organised by the Archbishop of Dublin,‡ and it is not unlikely. From personal contact he was able to appreciate the character of the Anglo-Normans; he saw how they had butchered his people and robbed them of their property; they were besides of an alien race; the Archbishop was intensely Irish; he was son of the chieftain of Imaal; and he wished that his own race would be masters in their own land.

Strongbow's position became desperate. After two months his provisions began to fail; there was such scarcity that a measure of wheat was sold for a mark, and a measure of barley for a half mark; only fifteen days' provisions remained and, calling a council of his chief men, it was determined to send the

\* *Hibernica*, pp. 26-7.

† *Cambrensis*, p. 216.

‡ *Cambrensis*, p. 221. On this subject Regan is silent.

Archbishop to the Ardri to negotiate terms. If the siege was raised, Strongbow offered to become Roderick's vassal and to hold Leinster from him as from his superior lord and king. But the Ardri scouted such terms, told Strongbow that he should quit Leinster, surrender the towns of Dublin, Waterford and Wexford and, by a certain day, which he named, that all the English should leave Ireland and go back to their own country : otherwise he would make an assault on Dublin and carry it by force.\* And an enterprising leader with such an army as he had could have made a breach in the walls and carried the city by assault, or he could have waited and starved out the garrison. But it has often been the melancholy fate of Ireland to have a leader without the capacity to lead, and never had she one so unfit for his position as Roderick O'Connor. He had inherited the name but not the courage of his ancestors. Vain, frivolous, weak-minded, unable to form a decision, or to carry it out when formed, he spent his time round Dublin reviewing his troops, indulging in childish display ; and such little conception of a commander's duties had he, that he placed no sentinels on guard to warn the army of a possible attack. Inside the city there was no such carelessness or irresolution. Roderick's answer presented but two courses to them, either to abandon everything their swords had won, or to sally forth from the city and attack their assailants. To delay was to starve, for their provisions were failing fast. It seemed madness for so small an army to attack so large an army, but often the boldest and most hazardous course is the safest ; at the worst they could die, and they knew how to die like men. Leaving behind them their Irish allies, whom they distrusted, and also a small garrison for the city, they formed their whole army into three divisions, two hundred in each, one division under de Cogan, another under Raymond, and the other under Strongbow and Maurice FitzGerald. The whole army thus formed and led fell upon the Irish camp at Finglas.† The surprise was great and the victory was complete. The Irish fled, almost without striking a blow, numbers were slain, and Roderick, who was bathing at the time,‡ narrowly escaped with his life, nor would his soldiers have any reason for regret if he was pierced by some English lance. The siege was raised, the Irish army melted away, and the English returned

\* *Hibernica*, p. 28.

† *Hibernica*, p. 29. This is only 600 out of near 5000 at the capture of Dublin. Where were the remainder ? Some, perhaps, had returned to England, some were left to garrison the city, and some perhaps to overawe the Irish allies and to protect the city against a fresh attack of Godred of Man, who menaced the place from his ships.

‡ *Cambrensis*, p. 224.

to the city laden with booty, and with provisions sufficient to victual the city for a whole year.

While Dublin was besieged, a messenger arrived from Wexford informing Strongbow that FitzStephen was besieged by the townsmen there and would have to surrender if not aided from Dublin within three days.\* Strongbow was then unable to aid him—he was in the last extremity himself—but when Roderick O'Connor was defeated and his army dispersed, the Earl proceeded to Wexford, leaving Dublin with a garrison in charge of Milo de Cogan. On his way south, he was attacked at Odrone by O'Ryan, chief of that district; but the English were victorious and arrived safely at Wexford.† It was only, however, to find that FitzStephen and his garrison had been overpowered, that FitzStephen was a prisoner, and Strongbow was warned that if he attacked the town they would send him out FitzStephen's head. Leaving Wexford unmolested, he passed on to Waterford, where he was visited by O'Brien of Thomond, who proposed to him to unite their forces and attack the King of Ossory. The Earl agreed, and he and O'Brien were soon at the head of two thousand men, prepared to overrun Ossory. Its king, Donogh, desired an interview, believing he could satisfy Strongbow, and Maurice de Prendergast‡ was despatched to afford Donogh a safe-conduct coming to the camp and returning. When he arrived, both Strongbow and O'Brien began to upbraid him, charged him with many treasons and seemed on the point of putting him to death. Immediately Maurice de Prendergast mounted his horse, bade his own company to do the same, reminded the Earl and O'Brien that they had promised safe conduct to the King of Ossory, that they dishonoured themselves in breaking their promises, and swore by the cross that he would allow no man to lay hands on Donogh, and he took the precaution of never leaving him until he was safely back in Ossory. While they were yet meditating the invasion of Ossory and making all necessary preparations for it, a peremptory mandate reached Strongbow that he was to proceed to England without delay, for the King must get an explanation of his conduct. He had already sent Raymond le Gros to the King || assuring him that all he possessed in Ireland he was willing to hold at the King's free disposal. A second messenger was sent in the

\* Cambrensis, p. 222.

† *Hibernica*, p. 30.

‡ *Ibid*, 31-2. This was the same Maurice who once fought with Ossory and against Dermot. After leaving Ireland he made his way to Strongbow and was with him when he landed at Waterford.

|| Cambrensis, pp. 216-17.



person of Mountmaurice, but the King was yet unsatisfied; the mandate to Strongbow was not to be disregarded, and, relinquishing for the time his expedition against Ossory, he at once proceeded to England.\*

In his absence (1171), Dublin was again attacked. The Danes had long been rulers of the city; its advantageous position for trade and commerce made it one of their most valued possessions; nor was it likely they would abandon it without a struggle. When it was captured by the English, Hasculf MacTurkill sailed away to his kindred, seeking for aid, as in other days Sitric had sought for aid against Brian Boru. From the Isle of Man and the Isles of Scotland, and from Norway, especially from Norway, they came, under a terrible warrior, John the Dane; and when Hasculf again appeared in the Liffey he had a fleet of sixty vessels and an army of ten thousand men. De Cogan's army was small, not more than 600 men in all, but they were the best of soldiers, they were skilfully led, and such was their confidence in themselves that Milo de Cogan himself, with only 300 men, issued out of one of the gates of the city, to meet the enemy's attack. He was driven back with the loss of some of his men. Milo's brother, Richard, had been ordered with 300 horsemen to issue from a different gate, and just as the Danes were impetuously pursuing Milo's troops, these horsemen rode furiously amongst them, trampled and cut them down, broke and disordered their ranks and drove them in headlong flight into the city.† In the work of slaughter, the English were aided by some Irish troops, and so great was the loss of the enemy that not more than two thousand escaped to their ships. Among the prisoners taken was Hasculf MacTurkill himself. When he was brought before de Cogan, his attitude was not that of submission or defeat, for he told his conqueror that if life were spared him he would come again with a more formidable army.‡ Milo's answer was to strike off his head, and thus perished the intrepid Dane, the last Danish ruler of Dublin.

\* *Hibernica*, p. 33:

† *Ibid.*, pp. 34-36.

‡ *Cambrensis*, p. 220.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### *Henry II. in Ireland.*

William the Conqueror's design on Ireland—Henry II. and Pope Adrian IV.—The authenticity of Adrian's Bull—Henry's arrival at Waterford, his forces, his march to Dublin—Submission of the Irish Chiefs—Henry and the clergy—Synod of Cashel—Henry leaves Ireland—Appoints De Lacy first Viceroy—De Lacy and O'Rorke—Strongbow defeated at Offaly—Leaves for England, sent back as Viceroy—Raymond Le Gros and the Army—Battle at Thurles—War in Meath—Raymond captures Limerick—Death of Strongbow.

HENRY II. was the first English King who came to Ireland, but he was not the first English King who intended to come, for it has been said that William the Conqueror himself seriously proposed the conquest of Ireland, and that if he had lived but two years longer, he would have conquered it; and it is added, that he would have done so without any armament.\* When Henry came, in 1171, he was already seventeen years on the English throne, but he had long meditated coming to Ireland. The very year and month (December, 1154), in which he became King, an Englishman—the only one who has ever become Pope—ascended the Papal throne. His name was Nicholas Breakspeare his title as Pope was Adrian IV. The young King sent an embassy to congratulate the new Pope, and these royal messengers—the bishops of Evreux, Lisieux and Le Mans, and the Abbot of St. Albans†—were instructed to say, amongst many other things, that the state of Ireland—religious and moral—was deplorable, that their master, Henry, was willing to undertake its reformation, but as an obedient child of the Church, he required the Pope's permission and blessing. The efforts of Henry's messengers were seconded by John of Salisbury,‡ who was an intimate personal friend of Adrian, and who, in his

\* *The Normans*, p. 343—Quotation from Wace. It is a pity that Master Wace did not say how this could be done, and by what secret the Conqueror could charm the Irish into submission.

† *Adrian IV. and Ireland* (Malone), p. 14.

‡ He was a scholar of eminence, and afterwards Bishop of Chartres.

book, the *Metalogicus*, claims the whole credit for what followed. The Pope acceded to Henry's wishes and issued the following Bull or Privilege, for it was called by both names :—

“Adrian, Bishop, servant of the servants of God, to his dearest Son in Christ, the illustrious King of England greeting and apostolical benediction.

“Your Majesty quite laudably and profitably considers how to extend the glory of your name on earth and increase the reward of eternal happiness in Heaven, when, as a Catholic Prince, you propose to extend the limits of the Church, to announce the truth of the Christian faith to ignorant and barbarous nations, and to root out the weeds of vice from the field of the Lord ; and the more effectually to accomplish this you implore the counsel and favour of the Apostolic See. In which matter we are confident that the higher your aim and the greater the discretion with which you proceed, the happier, with God's help, will be your success ; because these things that originate in the ardor of faith and the love of religion are always wont to arrive at a good issue and end. Certainly Ireland and all the islands on which Christ, the Sun of Justice, has shone, and which have accepted the doctrines of the Christian faith, of right belong, as your Highness doth acknowledge, to Blessed Peter and the Holy Roman Church. Wherefore we the more willingly sow in them a faithful plantation and a seed pleasing to God, inasmuch as we know by internal examination that it will be strictly required of us. You have signified to us, dearest son in Christ, that you desire to enter the island of Ireland to subject that people to laws and to root out therefrom the weeds of vice, also that you desire to pay from every house an annual pension of one penny to Blessed Peter, and to preserve the rights of the churches of that land inviolate and whole. We, therefore, regarding with due favor your pious and laudable desire and according a gracious assent to your petition, deem it pleasing and acceptable that for the purpose of extending the limits of the Church, checking the torrent of wickedness, reforming evil manners, sowing seeds of virtue, and increasing the Christian religion, you should enter that island and execute whatever shall be conducive to the honour of God and the salvation of that land. And let the people of that land receive you honourably and reverence you as lord, the rights of the churches remaining indisputably inviolate and whole, and the annual pension of one penny from every house being reserved to Blessed Peter, and the Holy Roman Church. If, therefore, you will carry to completion what with a mind so disposed you have conceived, study to form the people to good morals, and as well by yourself as by those whom you shall find qualified



for the purpose, by faith, word, and conduct so act, that the Church may be adorned, that the religion of the Christian Faith may be planted and may increase ; and let all that concerns the honour of God and the salvation of souls be ordered in such manner, that you may deserve to obtain from God a plentiful everlasting reward, and on earth succeed in acquiring a name glorious for ages.”\*

Before an assembly, made up of the King and of the nobles and clergy held at Winchester, the Pope's letter was read and approved of, and Henry would have proceeded to Ireland at once, but his mother had some misgivings in the matter ; she counselled him not to go, and, in accordance with her wishes, the intended expedition to Ireland was postponed.† The King's mother died, but his troubled reign offered a continuous series of subjects for the exercise of his activity and ambition ; and amid these distracting cares Ireland and her ills were forgotten. The invitation of MacMurrough, nearly twenty years later, revived Henry's interest in Irish affairs and re-awakened his ambition, and the Bull, which had slept peacefully for so many years among the archives at Winchester, was again remembered. But Adrian was then dead, an Englishman no longer sat on the Papal throne, and a Pope reigned—Alexander III.—who, perhaps, would look with greater suspicion on Henry, and listen with less complacency to his appeals. Besides, he had become better and less favorably known at Rome. His long and bitter struggle to coerce the Church in England and make it an obedient instrument of his will had ended tragically and Henry's hands, in the estimation of most men were reddened with the blood of Thomas à Beckett. To use Adrian's Bull in such circumstances would not be regular, and when Henry went to Ireland, he did not use it—for according to the jurisprudence of the times a Papal Bull became null and void in the hands of the receiver when the guilt of murder supervened. But Henry soon cleared himself to the satisfaction of the Papal Legates of complicity in

\* Cambrensis, pp: 260-62: Ginnell : *The Doubtful Grant of Ireland*, pp. 14 and 15. The original document in Latin may be seen in Usher's *Sylloge*. No. 46. The translation given here is from Ginnell. It is more literal and more accurate than that given by the translator of Giraldus. Ginnell's small volume, and another by the Very Revd. S. Malone, *Pope Adrian IV. and Ireland* are recent publications, and, from opposite standpoints, are entirely concerned with the AUTHENTICITY of Adrian's Bull. Both works give evidence of much research and learning ; both are combative and dogmatic in tone ; the authors seem to have made up their minds in advance, and the conviction is borne upon the reader that it is the advocate rather than the historian that speaks:

† Usher's *Sylloge*.

Beckett's murder,\* and to show his good wishes for the Church, he abandoned many points for which against the Church and its ministers in England he had struggled tenaciously and long.† He even did public penance at Beckett's tomb for his seeming incitement to the murder;‡ he appeared a penitent and humbled king, and, as such, he again approached the Papal throne and obtained from Alexander III., (1172) a renewal of the grant of Adrian, in a confirmatory Papal Bull.

For centuries no doubt seems to have arisen as to the authenticity of Adrian's Bull, but, in the seventeenth century, two Irish writers—Stephen White|| and John Lynch\*\*—attacked it as spurious, and the subject has often been debated since with ability and learning, often also with acrimony and partisan zeal. It has been maintained that the grounds on which Adrian rested his right to transfer the dominion of Ireland—the donation of Constantine—did not exist, as the donation was discovered to be a forgery; that the Irish Church stood in no need of reform, the work of reform having been already effected by Malachy and his contemporaries,†† that the Synod of Cashel (1172), held under the auspices of Henry did not exhibit any great laxity of morals, or any errors of faith, and that the state of religion in Ireland, as there disclosed, could be favourably compared with the state of religion in Wales as described by Giraldus himself. It is asked in astonishment how could the Pope hand over Ireland to a stranger, without hearing its representatives in its defence. Much is made of the fact that the chief authority in favor of the Bull is Giraldus who, as a historian, is utterly devoid of character, and rarely deserving of credence—and a strong argument on the same side is, that no copy of the Bull in existence bears either date or signature. These reasons are weighty, and give rise to serious misgivings, but they are not entirely conclusive, and the grounds are many for holding that the Bull was actually issued.

\* Lingard's *History of England*, Vol. II.; p. 96. It was to meet these Legates that Henry had to leave Ireland so soon and hasten to Normandy.

† *Ibid.* He agreed to allow appeals in cases of persons suspected by himself, and he abolished all customs introduced in his reign, which were derogatory to the liberties of the clergy.

‡ The date of his doing penance was in 1174, two years after Alexander's Letter.

|| He was a Jesuit, and highly esteemed by Usher. (Ware's *Writers* [Harris], Vol. II., p. 103.)

\*\* Lynch was the author of the well-known *Cambrensis Eversus*.

†† Not certainly by Malachy, for it appears from the *Four Masters* that at the Synod of Drogheda, or Kells (1152), a decree had to be passed that men were to put away concubines—Mr. Moore thinks this refers to the clergy, though it is not expressly stated. (O'Donovan's Note.)

That the donation of Constantine was discovered to be a forgery is of little importance, for it was believed in, during the twelfth century and after, acted upon by Popes, and acquiesced in by the people. The case of Ireland presents special difficulty, for Constantine never had any dominion over it, and what he never had he could not transfer. But it is not necessary that Adrian's act should stand or fall by this supposed donation. It was well recognis'd in the Middle Ages that the Pope could transfer the dominion of Christian States. The rulers of these States were half elective, half hereditary, and held their power as Christian rulers and for the good of the Christian religion. The conviction was deep-seated, in the minds of Catholics, that supreme power could not be given to any except a Catholic, that in the implied contract between princes and people there was a condition, that the people should faithfully obey their prince, so long as he remained a Catholic, but that a heretical prince had no claim on their allegiance. And it was considered to be the privilege, and even the duty, of the Pope to declare how long a ruler was faithful to his obligations and his oaths, and when he had forfeited his right to rule.\* Such extraordinary power, so foreign to modern ideas and practices, was not considered strange in the twelfth century, and was often exercised. The age was one of violence and lawlessness, the Holy See alone was a centre of religion and refinement, and it was well that, by the consent of all, such a power existed, which could be invoked by the subject against the oppression of his ruler, and by the ruler against the encroachments of an aspiring neighbour, or the turbulence of a rebellious vassal.† Nor was the right of Adrian to grant Ireland to Henry II. disputed by the Irish themselves,‡ or even its justice called in question until the lapse of a century and a half. And if we place ourselves in the twelfth century, and try to realise the condition of Ireland then, and the position of Henry, we shall more readily admit that the Pope was not much to blame.

A long and wearisome period of 140 years had passed since, in the moment of victory, Brian Boru and most of his family had fallen at Clontarf. Some confusion might be expected to arise as to the succession, especially as the Dalcassian dynasty

\* Gosselin : *Power of the Popes in the Middle Ages*, Vol. II, p. 9. Sometimes the condition that a ruler should be a Catholic was an express provision of Constitutional Law (Gosselin, p. 264, *et seq*).

† *Ibid.*, Vol. II., p. 58.

‡ King's *Church History of Ireland*, Vol. III.—Appendix. Letter from Donal O'Neill to the Pope (1318). It is complained that Adrian, as an Englishman, was prejudiced in favour of England, but it is not complained that he *went beyond his rights*:



had been but lately established, and its claims to pre-eminence rested on force rather than on descent. But it might also be expected that out of chaos order would arise, and that among the different contending families some one would emerge from the struggle, triumphant and supreme, when his rivals had been humiliated and overthrown. Yet age after age went past, and the struggle still continued; when anyone of the contending parties reached supremacy, it was but fleeting and transitory, and after a century and a half the struggle was still undecided and maintained. Nor was there the least prospect, at the close of the period, of a central government being established, nor the least hope that the end of the struggle was at hand. Amid the clash of arms religion does not flourish; and the Danish wars and the long era of civil discord which followed, had left the Irish Church in the condition described by St. Bernard. With a settled government—the guarantee of peace—the Church would have quickly righted itself, perhaps even renewed its ancient glory, for such men as Gillebert and Celsus, and Malachy and Laurence of Dublin, and Christian of Lismore were earnest and zealous reformers and were well supported by the other bishops. But distracted by the tumult of war, their efforts could not be successful. Nor is there much justice in the complaint, that Ireland was condemned by the Pope unheard. From Gillebert to Gelasius, a series of Papal delegates was continued, whose duty it would be to present the true state of Ireland at Rome. Malachy had gone twice to see the reigning Pope, and had long conversations with him about Ireland; and at the Synod of Kells, Cardinal Paparo was sent specially from Rome to preside, and in due course described the condition of Ireland on his return. What further information did the Pope require, or from whom could he receive it? Not from the mass of the people, for they were merely instruments in the hands of turbulent chiefs, who recklessly spilt their clansmen's blood, as they recklessly spilt their own. As to the chiefs themselves they could not be influenced for good. Some, perhaps, could not give up war because, being attacked, they should defend themselves. Others would not be at peace. They would neither do good themselves, nor allow others to do it.\* In such circumstances the Pope, in the interest of Ireland itself, looked for a master and a remedy from without, seeing it was useless to hope for either from within.

To reform the Irish Church, or any church, Henry II. would appear to be a bad selection. A Cardinal, after a long

\* In the *Four Masters* proof of this statement is found on every page. *Vid.* also Malone, *Pope Adrian IV. and Ireland*, pp. 91 101.

interview with him, declared that he had never met so audacious a liar;\* and his own son, Richard, once said to his advisers—that in his family the custom was for the son to hate the father, that the whole family had come from the devil and to the devil they should return.† “He could,” says Giraldus, “scarcely spare an hour to hear mass and then he was more occupied in counsels and conversation about affairs of state than in his devotions.” And he adds that he seized on the revenues of the Church and gave the money to his soldiers.‡ But this was Henry at a later stage of his career, and not when he applied for and obtained Adrian’s Bull. He was then but twenty-one years of age, active, energetic, ambitious, swayed, it might easily be thought, by the generous impulses of youth, and if it was his high purpose to restore peace to a distracted land, and prosperity to a church that had fallen from its high estate, was it for Adrian to doubt his zeal, or to question whether he was sincere? Henry had come of a race with many faults, it is true, but with many virtues as well, autocratic, insolent, overbearing, yet generous and helpful to the church; and the contrast presented by a contemporary writer between the state of religion in England, in Saxon and in Norman times, shows that the church had prospered under Norman rule. “In process of time,” says William of Malmesbury, “the desire after literature and religion had decayed for several years before the arrival of the Normans. The clergy could scarcely stammer out the words of the Sacraments, and a person who understood grammar was an object of wonder and astonishment.”|| Of the Normans he has many hard things to say, but he adds, that nevertheless they revived the observances of religion, that churches rose in every village, and monasteries in towns and cities, that the country flourished with renovated rites, and that each wealthy man thought his day lost, which he had not signalled by some magnificent action.\*\* Might not similar results follow in Ireland? To stop the raids and forays of the chiefs, to preserve the monasteries from outrage, and the churches from sacrilege, to allow the bishops to hold their synods,†† and to aid in carrying out their decrees

\* Gilbert, *The Viceroys of Ireland*, p. 25.

† *Ibid.*, p. 26.

‡ Cambrensis, p. 252.

|| *William of Malmesbury's Chronicle*, p. 279.

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 280.

†† That they were not allowed to do so sometimes, appears from the *Four Masters* at the year 1158, for the Connaught bishops who were going to the Synod of Briggmac-Tighe, were set upon by O'Mellaghlin of Meath; two of their retinue killed, and themselves chased across the Shannon, so that they had to return home without attending the Synod.

this was all that was required for the church's prosperity, and all this could be guaranteed under the rule of a monarch so powerful as Henry II. Adrian IV. was educated at Paris under an Irish monk, Marianus of Ratisbon;\* he must have also met many other Irish scholars, men of sanctity and zeal, he must have often heard them lament the distracted state of their country, and to him, as an Englishman, it would be a just cause of pride that peace had been brought to the Irish Church, under an English-born Pope, and by the aid of an English king. Nor is there much force in the objection, that Henry proved to be the enemy of the Church instead of its friend, and that his coming to Ireland was the cause of evil instead of good. All this the Pope did not foresee; he was only human and could not read the secrets of the future.

It is unfortunate, though not fatal to Adrian's Bull, that no copy bears date or signature. Many public and important documents have suffered as much, many have perished altogether. State papers were not so carefully guarded in the twelfth century as they are now, and there was no reason why Adrian's Bull should be preserved with special care. As time passed, it was seen at Rome that the Anglo-Norman invasion, instead of proving a blessing to Ireland, only added to its ills; and when the English broke away from the Church of Rome, they desired to forget that an English king had ever gone a-begging to the Pope. It is not necessary to believe that the original document was wilfully destroyed, but neither at Rome nor at London was there any desire that it should be remembered.†

It was in 1171, on the 18th of October, that Henry II. landed at Waterford. His army was transported in 400 vessels and numbered 500 knights and 4,000 soldiers, horse and foot.‡ When the number of attendants on these is taken into account, the whole force reached little less than 10,000 men. With him was Strongbow. When he crossed over from Ireland, earlier in the year, he found the King at Newenham in Gloucestershire.

\* Lanigan, Vol. IV., p. 155.

† Adrian's Bull was evidently in existence when Alex. III. issued (1172) his confirmatory Letter, unless, indeed, we hold, as does Lynch (*Cambrensis Eversus*, Cap. XXIV.) that this document also is forged, and when Pope John XXII. wrote to Edward II. (1318), in answer to the remonstrance of Donal O'Neill, he sent him a copy of Adrian's Bull (*King's Church History of Ireland*, Vol. III., appendix).

Lynch (*Cam. Eversus*, Caps. XXIII-XXIV., Vol. II.) strongly, even vehemently, holds that Adrian's Bull is a forgery—his Translator and Editor (Dr. Kelly) holds the opposite view. *Vid.* also Lanigan, Vol. IV., pp. 158 *et seq.* and *Macariae Excidium*, pp. 242 *et seq.* These two latter works believe the Bull to be genuine.

‡ *Hibernica*, p. 36.



His reception was cold—Henry was even menacing, but he was disarmed by the humility and submissiveness of Strongbow, who laid at his feet—even made over to him in writing everything he possessed in Ireland, whether in right of his wife, or by the sword, allowed him to place royal garrisons in all his castles and did homage to him for Leinster. At last, says Giraldus, the storm subsided “and though the mutterings of the thunder were loud, the deadly bolt did not fall.”\* A wealthy and powerful lord at Waterford attempted to prevent the landing of the royal army, and stretched across the harbour three massive iron chains, but these were broken through, the whole army disembarked, and this lord—Reginald Mac Gillemory—was taken and hanged, and the natives, with but few exceptions, expelled from the town.†

Against so numerous an army the most complete unanimity among the Irish chiefs, marshalled and directed by one leader of the highest ability, would be required. Nor was it likely that even such union and leadership would prevail, for superiority of numbers, on the Irish side, would be more than counterbalanced by superiority of arms and discipline, on the side of the English. But there was among the Irish chiefs no such unanimity, and the incapacity, and even cowardice, of Roderick O'Connor was already so well established, that no national army would enthusiastically, or even willingly, serve under his command. Each prince, therefore, had to depend on the resources of his own territory and thus unequally matched against Henry, their only course was to tender him their submission. At Waterford, Dermot MacCarthy, King of Desmond, submitted, and at Cashel, whither Henry had marched by way of Lismore, O'Brien of Thomond tendered his submission. Passing on to Waterford, without much further delay, the English king proceeded through Ossory to Dublin, receiving on his way the submission of Magillapattrick of Ossory, and of O'Felan, chief of the Deisi; their example was followed at Dublin by O'Rorke of Breffni and O'Carroll of Oriel, and by several of the lesser chiefs.‡ Roderick O'Connor was as helpless as those who submitted, but though his power was gone, his pride and vanity remained, and though he was ready to submit, he would not do so in person. Henry despatched two of his knights—Hugh de Lacy and William Fitzadelm—to treat with him; they met him on the banks of the Shannon and received from him an acknowledgement of their master's supremacy.|| The princes

\* *Cambrensis*, p. 228; Ware's *Annals*.

† Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 25.

‡ *Cambrensis*, pp. 230-31; Ware's *Annals*.

|| *The O'Conors of Connaught*, pp. 66-7.

of the North alone—perhaps finding some safety in their distance from Dublin—scorned to submit to a foreigner, and tenaciously and courageously clung to their ancient freedom. Even these Henry expected to subdue, and perhaps without the employment of force. In war he was experienced and skilful, but he preferred to attain his ends by peaceful means\*; and in Ireland his crafty policy was to conquer rather by kindness than by force. He loved to pose as the protector of the people and the avenger of their wrongs, and when the inhabitants of Wexford brought to him at Waterford their prisoner FitzStephen, and complained of all the evils he had done them, Henry loaded him with chains, and, tying him to another prisoner, had him cast into Reginald's Tower, though he took care soon after to set him free.†

In Dublin—in that part of it now occupied by the south side of Dame Street—and in a large palace built of peeled osiers, Henry spent the winter of 1171, and the spring of the following year. To the sumptuous banquets which Norman luxury loved, and Norman cooks were able to prepare—the flesh of cranes, peacocks, herons, swans and wild geese‡—he invited the native chiefs, all of whom he took every pains to conciliate and even flatter, and all of whom went away, marvelling at the number and splendour of his retinue, at the wealth and luxury displayed, and marvelling no less at the condescension of a king, who was then one of the mightiest potentates of the earth. From the chiefs, whom he had thus favorably impressed, Henry turned his attention to the bishops, whose good will he was most anxious to obtain. The Bull of Adrian was obtained, so that he might reform the Irish Church, and unless he wished to be stigmatised as a hypocrite, he should give some evidence of reforming zeal. By his directions a Synod was held at Cashel (1172), at which Henry was represented by Ralph, Archdeacon of Llandaff, Nicholas, his chaplain, and another Ralph, “Abbot of Buildewas.” The president was the Papal Legate, Christian, Bishop of Lismore, and, besides these, were Laurence O'Toole of Dublin, Catholicus, Archbishop of Tuam, and the other bishops of Munster, Leinster, and Connaught,|| except Gelasius, but the northern bishops held aloof.\*\* Following the lead of their chiefs, the bishops accepted Henry as their lord, and some decrees which they passed in reference to church discipline were, it seems, sent to Rome, and demonstrated Henry's zeal so satisfactorily, that he soon

\* *Cambrensis*, p. 251.

† *Ibid.*, p. 229. Ware's *Annals*;

‡ Gilbert's *Viceroy's*, pp. 27-28;

|| *Cambrensis*, pp. 232-34.

\*\* Lanigan, Vol. IV., pp. 204-5;

after obtained the letter of Alexander III., confirmatory of Adrian's Bull. His progress so far was a triumphal one. He had impressed all most favorably, the chiefs by his condescension and hospitality, the church by his zeal, and he stood out in marked and favourable contrast to these rapacious freebooters who had come over with Strongbow. Without striking a blow three-fourths of the country had submitted to him, and it seemed likely that the Chiefs of Tirconnell and Tirowen would not hold out long, but, on the contrary, would follow the lead given them by the other provinces. All this Henry could not wait to see, for urgent messages came from England that the Pope had excommunicated him for his share in the murder of Thomas à Beckett, and that two Cardinals—Albert and Theotimus—were sent from Rome to place his dominions under interdict.\* This was serious news, and Henry was compelled to abandon his further designs in Ireland, and to hurry with all speed to Normandy, to meet the legates and free himself from the crime laid to his charge. Leaving Dublin, he first proceeded to Waterford, and thence went to Wexford, from which port he set sail.

In leaving Ireland, Henry placed Waterford in charge of Robert FitzBernard, with whom he associated, in the government of the place, Humphrey Bohun and Hugh de Gandevill. In Wexford, he appointed Philip de Braos with William FitzAdelm and Philip de Hastings as his assistants, and at Dublin was Hugh de Lacy, assisted by Robert FitzStephen and Maurice FitzGerald. † Hugh de Lacy was the King's special representative, charged with the general supervision of the King's interests, and he is usually put down as the first Viceroy.‡ Dublin by royal charter was given to the people of Bristol; || it was inhabited by people from that city, and the old inhabitants were either entirely, or for the most part, expelled, as had been already done at Waterford,\*\* and perhaps also at Wexford. These three cities were garrisoned by the King's soldiers; within their walls English law was established, English customs existed, and Henry's authority was amply recognised. Strongbow held Leinster from him

\* *Cambrensis*, pp. 236-7.

† Ware's *Annals*.

‡ Harris's *Ware*, Vol. II., p. 102.

|| *Historic and Municipal Documents* (Gilbert), p. 1: Henry II, also granted another Charter to these colonists from Bristol granting them freedom from certain imposts throughout his dominions. (*Ibid.*, p. 2.)

\*\* At a subsequent date Henry II. granted Waterford to the Danes, admitting them to the full right of English subjects, and this, no doubt, because he could not get sufficient English to settle there. (Leland's *History of Ireland*, Vol. I., p. 82—Copy of Charter of Edw. I.)



as a fief, but outside Leinster and the cities named the King's power was but little, for the submission of the Irish chiefs did not go far. They acknowledged Henry as they would a powerful Ardri. They paid him some small tribute, they would in case of a grave dispute have accepted his arbitrament and have peacefully acquiesced in his ruling, at least, as long as he could overawe them by superior force, but in all other respects they were free. Their manners and customs and laws, their division of classes and offices, the title to their lands, the constitution and privileges of their septs and clans, these were left unchanged and if Thomond and Desmond and Meath were fiefs of Henry II., in each of them it was the Brehon and not the Feudal law which prevailed. It was on these conditions the Irish chiefs submitted, and under these conditions their submission was received, yet, in defiance of these contracts, Henry before his departure, gave Leinster to Strongbow, Meath to De Lacy, and Ulster, over which he had acquired no authority whatever, to John de Courcy. To Leinster Strongbow might be allowed a title as the heir and successor of Dermot MacMurrough, to which was superadded the right of conquest and to some extent of effective occupation. But O'Rorke was still supreme in Meath and Breffni, though acknowledging the supremacy of Henry, while in Ulster there was no transference of power whatever, either by conquest, or by voluntary submission. These conflicting interests were certain to produce war. The Anglo-Norman chiefs would try to establish themselves in those provinces so unjustly handed over to them by their royal master, the Irish chiefs were not likely to surrender what was theirs, and there seemed no possible mode in which, while maintaining peace, these conflicting rights could be reconciled. Nor was the prospect of such war displeasing to Henry II. It would weaken the Irish princes and make their ultimate conquest all the easier for him and his successors; nor would there be any danger while several Anglo-Norman chiefs were separately engaged, each in his own province, each independent of the others, that any one would become so powerful that he could throw off his allegiance to England and set up a powerful Irish monarchy.

The trouble began in Meath and in a dispute between Hugh de Lacy and Tiernan O'Rorke. The point in dispute is not clear. Thirty years before (1144), the ancient Kingdom of Meath had been divided into three parts, by Turlogh O'Connor, and one of these parts was assigned to O'Rorke. In the interval, he had defended this acquisition, perhaps even extended its limits. To this territory, or portion of it, De Lacy laid claim in accordance with Henry's concession. O'Rorke refused to surrender what he believed to be his, but a friendly conference was arranged

between the disputants, and they met at Tlachta near Athboy. During the progress of the negotiations, a quarrel arose, blows were exchanged, one of De Lacy's attendants—his interpreter—was slain, and as O'Rorke was mounting his horse to escape from the danger that threatened him, an English horseman rode up and transfixed him with a spear. The Irish chroniclers all maintain that the treachery was all on the English side; Giraldus, on the other side, has no doubt whatever that it was on the Irish side, and speaks with bitterness of the treachery and treason of O'Rorke, "the one-eyed King of Meath." The body of O'Rorke was taken to Dublin, the head cut off and placed over the gate of the fortress, and the body gibbeted with the feet upwards, at the northern side of Dublin.\* The example of De Lacy in Meath was quickly followed by Strongbow in Leinster. He had conquered only part of the province, and the concession of the whole province by the English King did not bring with it the peaceful submission of the native chiefs, nor the acquiescence of the people, and there were still many of these Leinster chiefs who clung with tenacity and determination to their ancient freedom. Against one of these, O'Dempsey of Offaly, Strongbow marched with a thousand men, and unable to resist such an army, O'Dempsey† fell back. Strongbow, after wasting and plundering Offaly, or at least O'Dempsey's portion, was returning to his head-quarters at Kildare when at a narrow pass, his rear guard, under his son-in-law, De Quincy, was attacked by O'Dempsey and driven into Kildare in confusion, with the loss of its leader and many others. Defeated, but not materially weakened, Strongbow was meditating a fresh expedition, when he was summoned by Henry II. to England. His aid was required in his French wars, and so well pleased was Henry with the services of the Earl, that he appointed him to guard the strong fortress of Gisors in Normandy (1173), and, after a short time, sent him back in the same year to Ireland, appointing him Viceroy in room of Hugh de Lacy.‡

The prospect before the new Viceroy was not encouraging. The native chiefs, no longer awed by the presence of Henry and the overwhelming force at his command, showed a readiness to assert themselves, and the English chiefs began to quarrel. Strongbow's treasury was soon exhausted, the soldiers clamoured for their pay, and not having it to get, they were ready and eager

\* *Four Masters. Cambrensis*, pp. 242-44.

† Of Offaly; the chief was O'Connor Faly.—O'Dempsey only held part of the territory along the east side of the river Barrow, and paid some tribute to O'Connor (*Hibernica*, p. 38.)

‡ Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 37.

for plunder. The successor of De Quincy in the military command of Leinster was Harvey de Mountmaurice, and as he would not countenance plunder, the soldiers refused to serve under his command, and demanded that Raymond le Gros be appointed their leader. Necessity forced Strongbow to accede to their request, and Raymond was placed in supreme military command.\* His measures were energetic and decisive. He ravaged Offaly and plundered Lismore, defeated the Danes of Cork at sea, and Dermot MacCarthy of Desmond on land, and safely arrived at Waterford with all his plunder. Then he demanded to be made Constable of Leinster and also he demanded, and not for the first time, Basilea, Strongbow's sister, in marriage, and as both requests were refused, he left Waterford in disgust and retired to his castle of Carew, in Pembroke-shire,† while Mountmaurice resumed military command of the province.

The change of commanders was not fortunate for the invaders. Raymond was a brave soldier and a skilful leader; with the soldiers he was popular, for he always led them to victory and put no restraint on their plunderings of the Irish. Mountmaurice, on the other hand, was unpopular with the soldiers; his ideas of justice were better than those of Raymond, he was less enterprising and daring, and less skilful as a leader. His first expedition was disastrous. Donal O'Brien of Thomond had renounced his allegiance to the English, and Mountmaurice advised Strongbow to lead an army against him. With a large army they were soon on the march, but O'Brien, warned of their approach, came upon them in the early morning, near Thurles, and inflicted on them a crushing defeat, driving them back to Waterford, with the loss of seven hundred of their troops.‡ Shut up in that city, surrounded by enemies, almost in a state of siege, and with disaffection within the walls itself, Strongbow's position was one of extreme danger. The daring and skilful Raymond was then remembered, and Strongbow sent urgent messages to him to return with all the forces he could muster, and that all he had formerly asked and been refused would now be readily granted. Raymond soon landed at Waterford with nearly 500 troops, liberated Strongbow from the plight in which he was in, and both proceeding to Wexford, Raymond was married to Basilea with great pomp and appointed Constable

\* Ware's *Annals*.

† *Ibid.*, 1173.

‡ The *Four Masters* make it 1700. *Vid.* Ware's *Annals*. Giraldus (p. 257) allows that O'Brien was "not wanting in ability for one of his nation."



of Leinster.\* In the meantime, the Irish chiefs, encouraged by the victory of Thurles, rose in arms against the foreigners. A confederacy was formed, consisting of O'Neill of Tirowen, O'Mellaghlin of Meath, O'Carroll of Oriel, and MacDunleavy of Uladh, with Roderick O'Connor in supreme command.† With an army of 20,000 they entered Meath, levelled to the earth the Norman castles which De Lacy had built there, cleared the district of the English colonists; and de Lacy's governor of Trim demolished the castle there and hastened with all speed and with all his forces within the shelter of the walls of Dublin. It was Roderick O'Connor's opportunity, if he could only have used it, but his imbecility saved the situation, and instead of turning South and finishing what Donal O'Brien had commenced, he retraced his steps and returned home to Connaught. He had heard, it appears, that the dreaded Raymond with Strongbow was marching with the troops from Wexford, and not having the courage to confront them even with such superior forces, he declined the contest and went home. These events occurred in the year 1174.

In the next year, Leinster and Meath being safe, Strongbow directed his attention to Limerick, and Raymond, with all the forces he could muster, was directed to march towards Thomond and measure swords with Donal O'Brien. He was joined by the King of Ossory, who had an old grudge against O'Brien, and the united forces of Ossory and Raymond were soon before the walls of Limerick. But the difficulty was to cross the Shannon, for they could discover no fordable place. At last one of their number spurred his horse into the river and both horse and man safely reached the other side, a soldier followed, but he was drowned. Meyler Fitzhenry plunged into the river and swam across, and then Raymond himself, with the cry of "St. David" and accompanied by his whole force, got safely to the other side. When they reached the town, O'Brien's men fled. Raymond took possession and appointing Milo de Cogan its governor, he returned to Wexford.‡

Terrified at Raymond's successes, knowing well that he had lost the respect of the Irish chiefs and could not hope for their support if he was attacked, Roderick O'Connor began to tremble for his hereditary kingdom of Connaught, and sent

\* Ware's *Annals*. In the language of the time, Raymond was Constable of Leinster, and had its Banner and Ensign—military and civil authority—subject to Strongbow. (*Hibernica*, p. 38, note.)

† *Ibid.*, 1174.

\* *Ibid.*, 1175; *Giraldus* (p. 265) on this occasion puts a speech into the mouth of Raymond and gives a very flattering description of him.

ambassadors to England to negotiate fresh terms with Henry II. These ambassadors were Laurence, Archbishop of Dublin, Catholicus O'Duffy, Archbishop of Tuam, and Concors, Abbot of St. Brendans. They were received at Windsor, where a Council was held and terms between Roderick and Henry were embodied in a document, since called the Treaty of Windsor. Over Meath and Leinster and any other districts held by the English barons, and over the towns and cities garrisoned by Henry's troops Roderick was to have no further authority ; over the Irish Kings and princes he was recognised as supreme, but subject to Henry, to whom he was bound to pay an annual tribute of one hide for every ten head of cattle slaughtered in his territory, the same tribute to be paid by the other Irish princes, but through Roderick's hands and not directly from themselves. With these limitations, and subject to these obligations, Roderick was to hold his hereditary kingdom of Connaught, in the same way as he had held it before the arrival of the English, and should any of the Irish princes refuse to recognise him as their superior, or refuse allegiance to Henry, or fail to pay their stipulated tribute, then Henry was to lend his aid in reducing them to submission, or, if Roderick thought necessary, removing them from their position.\* That same year (1175), Henry sent over William Fitz-Adelm and Nicholas, prior of Wallingford with the Bull of Adrian IV., and the confirmatory Letter of Alexander, and at a synod of the Irish clergy, held at Waterford, these documents were published in Ireland, for the first time.† He would have preferred to conquer the country by the sword, and did not wish to be under any obligation to the Church,‡ but his progress was slow, his power had declined, instead of increasing, and by the publication of these documents he wished to enlist the support of the clergy, hoping much from their aid. This assistance, could he obtain it, he expected would be more effective than Raymond's sword, and produce more permanent results than Raymond's victories.

These victories were to Henry a cause of alarm rather than of pleasure. Success breeds jealousy ; Raymond's successes had excited the envy of men with less capacity, and they poured into Henry's ear stories of Raymond's ambition and pride.¶ Nor did these stories fail to make an impression. The King began to fear that Raymond was too powerful and might become a

\* *The O'Conors of Connaught*, pp. 71-72.

† *Cambrensis*, p. 260. Lanigan, Vol. IV., pp. 222 *et seq.*

‡ This is given as an explanation, and a not unlikely one, of why the Bull was not published sooner.

¶ *Cambrensis*, pp. 268-9. This conduct is especially attributed to Mountmaurice.

danger, and he sent four Commissioners to Ireland with peremptory orders, that Raymond was to resign his command and proceed at once to England. He was preparing to obey this command when events occurred which retarded his departure. Donal O'Brien had again become active, had laid siege to Limerick, and the army prepared by Strongbow refused to fight, except under the leadership of Raymond. In these circumstances he was given the command and marched south being joined on the way by Donogh, King of Ossory. Hearing of their approach, O'Brien raised the siege of Limerick and in a pass near Cashel awaited the advance of the enemy. But Raymond was forewarned and was not unprepared, and, after an obstinate contest, O'Brien was defeated and retired to his own territories, while Raymond continued his advance and arrived safely at Limerick.\* It appears he made some terms of peace with O'Brien. In a quarrel between two MacCarthy's of Desmond, his aid was invoked and obtained; the side he espoused was victorious, and Raymond returned to Limerick, amply rewarded by the successful combatant.† Awaiting him was a letter from his wife announcing that her great jaw-tooth had fallen out, and rightly interpreting this to mean that Strongbow was dead, he made terms with Donal O'Brien, entrusted him with the custody of Limerick, and with all his troops took his departure for Dublin, where he found that Strongbow was dead. He had only crossed the Shannon, when, on looking back, he saw that O'Brien had set fire to Limerick.‡

Strongbow had requested that he should not be interred until Raymond arrived, and when this happened the Earl was interred in Christ Church (June 1176) with great pomp, the Archbishop of Dublin being present. His death was said by the Irish writers to be due to an ulcer on the foot and was brought about by the Irish saints, so many of whose churches he had profaned.|| The picture of Giraldus\*\* does not accord with this and is not without interest. He describes the Earl as a man with a ruddy complexion, freckled skin, grey eyes, feminine features, a weak voice, a short neck, tall of stature, of great generosity and courtesy, ever ready to take advice and rarely relying on his own judgment. He was neither driven to despair in adversity nor puffed up by success. With the consent of the Royal Commissioners, Raymond assumed the government

\* *Cambrensis*, p. 270:

† Ware's *Annals*.

‡ *Cambrensis*, p. 272:

|| *Four Masters*. "He saw, as he thought, St. Bridget in the act of killing him."

\*\* *Cambrensis*, p. 226:



until the King's will should be known, and when it was William FitzAdelm was appointed Viceroy and Raymond was deprived of all authority, civil and military. He retired to his estates at Wexford and died there (1182.) Of all the English leaders he is the hero of Giraldus—he never fails to praise him, but it must be remembered they were of the same family and no man was more partial to his own family than Giraldus.\* This knowledge will help us to estimate his praises as it will help us to understand the invective which he pours so often on the head of Mountmaurice.

\* Nearly all those who were leaders of the first Anglo-Norman invaders were related, being descendants of Nesta, daughter of Rhys Ap Tudor Prince of South Wales. She was at first the mistress of Henry I., by whom she had a son, Henry, from whom are descended the FitzHenrys—Henry, Robert and Meyler. Discarded by Henry, she married firstly Gerald de Windsor of Pembroke, from whom are descended the FitzGerald and the DeBarris, among the former being Maurice and Raymond (Raymond le Gros, or the Fat, because he was so stout) among the latter were Robert and Philip de Barri and their brother Sylvester—(*Giraldus Cambrensis*), also the de Cogans. Nesta married secondly Stephen, Castellan of Abertivy, from whom are the FitzStephens, &c. The relationship was extended by marriages in Ireland (Vid: *Cambrensis*, p. 183. Genealogical Table.)

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## CHAPTER XV.

### *Progress of the Invaders.*

Hugh de Lacy and the English Colonists of Meath—The colonists and the natives—FitzAdelm de Burgho—Hugh de Lacy appointed Viceroy—Superseded and again appointed—His relations with the Irish and with Henry II.—Visit of Prince John—Revolt of the Irish Chiefs—De Lacy murdered—John de Courcy invades Ulster—Appointed Viceroy—His wars and conquests in Ulster—His relations with Hugh de Lacy the Younger—His fate.

IN the grant of Henry II. to Hugh de Lacy, made before the king left Ireland (1172), he made over to him the whole kingdom of Meath, to be held by the service of fifty knights, and in as ample a manner as it was ever held by Morrogh O'Mellaghlin, or by any other person before him or after him.\* The death of O'Rorke left De Lacy in full possession of East Meath, but O'Mellaghlin was still powerful in Westmeath, and his descendants held sway in that district for centuries to come; De Lacy made no attempt to dethrone him, on the contrary, his was one of the five great families, who by virtue of their royal blood were admitted to the full rights of English subjects, and were guaranteed—both themselves and their descendants—the protection of English law.† In the whole of East Meath, De Lacy had enormous possessions—all the present County of Meath, Delvin in Westmeath, portion of Dublin, as far as Castleknock and even to Santry and Clontarf, part of Kildare, part of King's County—in these districts over which the Molloyes and the O'Caharneys held sway. The area of this extensive and fertile district was no less than 800,000 acres of land.‡ Part of these lands De Lacy reserved for himself, but the greater part he

\* Harris's *Ware*, Vol. II., pp. 192-3.

† Leland's *History of Ireland*, Vol. I., pp. 82-83. These five families, or five bloods, as they have been often called, were O'Neill of Ulster, O'Connor of Connaught, O'Brien of Thomond, O'Mellaghlin of Meath and Mac Murrough of Leinster.

‡ Gilbert's *Viceroy of Ireland*, pp. 35-36.

parcelled out among his vassals, who were to hold these lands from him, as he held all Meath from King Henry—by military tenure. Regan has enumerated these grants,\* or some of them, but the places have not been in every case identified, though some of them have. To his friend, Hugh Tyrell, he gave Castleknock, to Meyler Fitz-Henry Ardnocker, in Westmeath; to Jocelin de Nangle lands round Navan and Ardbrecan, to Adam de Feipo, a district near Santry and Clontarf, to Gilbert de Nugent Delvin in Westmeath, to de Misset the lands of Luin in Meath and to Richard de Fleming, or Richard of Flanders, he gave a large amount of lands, in the neighbourhood of Slane. Besides these he settled in the district and endowed with lands, Petit and Gilbert de Nangle, and Robert de Lacy, and Richard de la Chappel and Hugh de Hose and Adam Dullard; and to Richard Tuite, as well as to all these, he gave fair possessions, and no doubt, to others also whose names are not recorded. Each of these knights was to build a Norman Castle, which would serve as a stronghold and a rallying point for the settlers, and which with its military defenders would overawe the surrounding natives into submission and quiescence. De Lacy imitated his vassals, and over the wide extent of the lands, which he reserved for his own personal use, he constructed several strong castles. Thus in strengthening his position and ensuring peace in his province, he spent his time, nor is there any reason to think that the position of the natives was worse under their new master than it was under the rule of O'Rorke, or the O'Mellaghlin. It was the policy of De Lacy to impress upon the Irish that he was their master but not their tyrant; he had no sympathy with needlessly harassing them, or robbing them of what was theirs; and it would be well, both for English and native, if his example had been generally followed.

In the war of 1174, the Meath colonists suffered much, but their sufferings did not last. The tide of invasion receded even more quickly than it advanced, Roderick O'Connor, who had marched almost to the walls of Dublin, on his return home confined his attention only to his native province; and the Treaty of Windsor, in the following year, debarred him from attacking the province of Meath, or even interfering in its affairs. The colonists returned to their lands, their ruined castles were repaired and new ones were built, a sense of security and strength succeeded a feeling of uncertainty and alarm, and all would have been well if De Lacy's vassals could only restrain their propensity for plunder. In this respect a certain knight named Fleming, or Richard de Flanders, was the greatest sinner. As

\* *Hibernica*, pp. 42-3.



his name indicates, he was one of those Flemish soldiers, of whom there were so many throughout Europe, ready to fight in any cause and under any flag for pay, whose instincts it was to plunder, who respected the strong and had little mercy for the weak. In his strong castle at Slane he kept a body of military adventurers, greedy for war and plunder. From time to time they issued from the castle gates, raided the lands of the surrounding natives, destroyed their property, drove away their cattle, burned their houses, ravished their women and murdered the people. Such outrages could not long be borne, except by slaves, and the natives had not yet learned to be slaves. In their distress they appealed to the princes of Tirowen and Oriel, and their appeal did not pass unheard, nor their injuries unavenged. These two chieftains entered Meath, attacked the English strongholds, destroyed the castles of Kells, Galtrim and Derrypatrick, wreaked their vengeance on Fleming and Slane castle, killed every individual within it, to the number of 500, and Fleming himself was among the slain.\* The same year that these events occurred (1176), Fitz Adelm de Burgho succeeded Strongbow as Viceroy. Descended from a half-brother of William the Conqueror,† he was therefore related to the reigning sovereign, had held important offices under him and seems to have enjoyed his entire confidence.‡ But he soon became unpopular with his own countrymen; he tried to curb their rapacity; he was specially opposed to Raymond le Gros and his relatives; and he incurred in consequence, the hatred of Giraldus, who describes him as a braggart against the defenceless, a flatterer of the rebellious:—"he was a man full of guile, bland and deceitful, much given to wine and women—covetous of money and ambitious of court favor." || The court favor he was able to retain for a time, but he had many and powerful enemies; the unsuccessful invasion of Connaught, which he countenanced, they made good use of with the King, Fitz Adelm lost the royal favor, was superseded in his office, and Hugh de Lacy (1178), was appointed Viceroy.

In the same year that he became Viceroy, he married a daughter of Roderick O'Connor, and the cry was soon raised by some of the English colonists, that he wished to become king. Henry's suspicions and jealousies were aroused; it appears De Lacy had married without obtaining the King's permission,

\* *Four Masters* (1176).

† Cox: *Hibernia Anglicana*, pp. 31-2.

‡ Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 42.

|| *Cambrensis*, p. 277. He gets credit for having attacked Armagh and taken away the Bacal Jesu to Christchurch, Dublin, but Lanigan thinks this was done by Philip de Braos in 1184: (Vol. IV, p. 241.)

and, perhaps under this pretext, he was dismissed from office, but before the year was out, he was again restored.\* Later still, he was again displaced and his post filled by two Anglo-Normans, John de Lacy and Richard de Peche, who were appointed as joint rulers.† They did little except to build a few castles, and in a short time they also were displaced (1181), and once more Hugh de Lacy became Viceroy, having appointed with him as adviser Robert of Salisbury whose duty, as Giraldus thinks, was to act as a spy on the Viceroy's proceedings and report everything to the King.‡ During the next few years, De Lacy built many strong castles throughout Leinster and Meath. Hitherto the greater number of these castles were in Meath, but Leinster as well as Meath was a fief of Henry II.; within its limits his sovereignty should be established and protected; and the Viceroy covered the province with a chain of these fortified castles; which might serve as a menace to the turbulent natives, and as a protection for the colonists and for the natives, who were peaceably disposed. One of these castles was at New Leighlin in Carlow, one at Idrone, one at Timahoe, one at Castledermot, one at Tullow, one at Kilkea and one at Nenagh, and many others besides.¶ But while he thus built so many fortresses, and doubtless intended to impress the natives with so many visible evidences of his strength, it was not his desire to rule altogether by force. He wished to restrain the predatory instincts of his own countrymen—a task of enormous difficulty—he wished to stand well in the opinion of the Irish, and his marriage with Roderick O'Connor's daughter had strengthened his hold on their affections. Once again flatterers and intriguers were at work; it was represented to Henry that De Lacy was too powerful for a subject; and moved by that petulant jealousy, which he had so often displayed, De Lacy's services were dispensed with (1184), and Philip of Worcester appointed in his place. The change could not be viewed with favor by the Irish, for one of the first acts of the Viceroy was to march northwards and plunder the churches of Armagh.\*\*

Some years previous to this date (1177), Henry II. had named his son John, Lord of Ireland. This young man, at the date of De Lacy's dismissal, was eighteen years of age, and his father thought that if he came to Ireland peace would be restored to the land, the natives would recognise him as their ruler, and

\* Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 46

† Harris's *Ware*, Vol. II., p: 102:

‡ *Cambrensis*, p. 291.

¶ *Ware's Annals. Cambrensis*, p: 291:

\*\* *Cambrensis*, p. 107.

the chiefs, though hesitating to obey a mere subject would have no hesitation to submit to the King of England's son. Leaving Pembrokeshire in Easter week (1185), Prince John arrived at Waterford the following day, with a large fleet, having three hundred knights, the usual proportion of horse and foot, and a large retinue, the most remarkable of whom was Gerald de Barri, better known as Giraldus Cambrensis and who, on this occasion, acted as John's secretary.\* Neither as prince nor king, was John ever a wise man, or a good man; and his favorites on this Irish expedition were not unworthy of him. They are described by Giraldus as braggarts and dandies, who swore much and drank much and boasted much. Their desire was to be successful courtiers; they studied the tastes and foibles of Prince John and seconded him in all his follies and debaucheries. With little ability for war, they had the presumption which so often springs from incompetence, criticised with severity the methods of De Lacy and his contemporaries in dealing with the Irish; and boasted that THEY would soon have the natives finally subdued.† On John's arrival, the Irish Chiefs in the neighbourhood went to meet him, to bid him welcome to Ireland and to proffer their respects and submission to him as their lord. They were entertained at court, and instead of being honored, were soon highly offended. The thoughtless crowd who accompanied John laughed at their rude manners, so different from their own mincing, courtier ways, jested at their dress and arms, and even pulled their long beards in derision. The Irish chiefs departed bursting with indignation, informed the other chiefs of what treatment they had received, told them that John was but a boy, with even more than a boy's levity and folly, and surrounded by others, as thoughtless and as foolish as himself. The natives in Leinster and Munster, who had hitherto been faithful to the English, were robbed and pillaged by these new-comers, driven from their lands and wandering, outcasts and homeless, among their countrymen, excited their sympathy and indignation. The flames of discontent were thus spread far and wide; the Irish chiefs of Cork and Thomond, who proposed on John's arrival to tender him their submission, suddenly changed their minds; and instead of proceeding to his court, formed a league against him. While he and his courtiers were wasting their time in idleness and debauchery, the Irish secretly made their preparations; the English were unsuspecting and unprepared, and while they were yet ignorant that the clouds were gathering, the storm had already burst.‡ The strong castles of Ardfinan

\* *Cambrensis*, p. 310:

† *Ibid.*, p. 320.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 316.



and Tipperary and Lismore were attacked, the older colonists, such as De Lacy, insulted and outraged as they had been, held aloof, and John and his army were overwhelmed. Ardfinan was taken by Donal O'Brien and its garrison put to the sword, Robert de Barri was slain at Lismore; Fitz Hugh at Olechan; the lands and crops of the colonists were wasted and destroyed; cooped up in the towns, decimated by war, famine and disease, John's army was reduced to a pitiable condition, and English power in Ireland was nearly destroyed.\* To avert still further calamities, John was recalled. He threw the whole blame for these disasters on De Lacy, complained that he would give no help, that he even prevented the Irish princes from paying tribute, and no doubt insinuated also that he even incited them to revolt.† With a father's partiality for a favourite son, Henry believed him; De Lacy was deprived of all power in the government of Ireland, though he was still left in possession of his vast estates and was all powerful in Meath. His career was soon tragically closed. He had seized that part of O'Caharney's territory on which stood the ancient monastery of Durrow, so closely linked with the life of St. Columba‡—and he had, in addition, used the stones of the venerable ruin for the building of a new feudal castle. As he stood one day surveying the newly erected building, (in the year 1186), an Irishman, named O'Meyey, stepped behind him, suddenly drew forth a battle-axe, which he had concealed beneath his cloak, and struck off De Lacy's head. O'Meyey, though hotly pursued, escaped. It appears he had been fostered by O'Caharney, in whose province Durrow stood, the affection between the fosterer and the fostered was strong and O'Meyey wished to be revenged on the despoiler of his chief, at whose instigation, perhaps, he undertook the work of revenge. Some of the Annalists, such as the *Four Masters*, will maintain that De Lacy's fate was due to the anger of St. Columba, whose monastery he had destroyed.|| Whatever the Irish may have thought of De Lacy, and it may be that some of them regretted his fate, it is certain that his master and king, Henry II., did not, and when the news reached him it is on record that he was much pleased.\*\*

\* *Cambrensis*, pp. 313-14. *Ware's Annals*.

† Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 50.

‡ It appears an ancestor of O'Caharney, or Fox, had given the land on which the monastery stood to St. Columba. (*Viceroy*s, p. 51.)

|| *Ware's Annals*—De Lacy left two sons,‡Walter, Lord of Meath, and Hugh, afterwards Earl of Ulster.

\*\* Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 494; "rex plurimum gavisus est," are the words of the Abbot of Peterborough, and of William of Newbury, "ingenti perfudit laetitia" (rex). Quoted by Gilbert.

The English power at the departure of Prince John was in such a perilous position, that if it was to be re-established, or even saved from total extinction, the government and defence of the English settlement should be placed in capable and vigorous hands. Just such a man Henry found in De Courcy, whom he appointed Viceroy. This John de Courcy was of good family. His ancestor, Richard de Courcy, had come from Normandy with William the Conqueror, and had received grants of land in England; and John himself had distinguished himself in King Henry's wars both in France and in England. In the pages of Giraldus his picture is complete. He was of fair complexion, tall, muscular, a giant in strength as well as in stature, fond of war, brave, daring, adventurous, with the qualities of a soldier rather than of a commander, miserably parsimonious, in peace sober and modest, and pious in a fashion peculiar to himself, for though he had no scruple about robbing an Irish church, he was on the other hand devotedly attached to the churches and the saints of his own Norman race.\* When FitzAdelm de Burgho became Viceroy (1176), there were many English adventurers in Dublin, who looked with indignation on his pacific policy, and not one was more indignant than De Courcy, who had been appointed to assist him in the government. His passion was for war and adventure, and he chafed under the restraints imposed by the Viceroy. It is claimed for him that he got a grant of Ulster from Henry II., but details, such as dates, are wanting, and Ware,† who gives extracts from the grants of Meath and Leinster, made to De Lacy and Strongbow, has none to give in the case of Ulster, nor does it appear how such a grant could be made; and all that Henry could do was to give him a *licence to conquer* the Northern province. And this De Courcy determined to do, and for that purpose gathered together an army of at least 700‡ men, among them being his brother-in-law, Sir Armoric St. Laurence, who had fought with him in all his wars and had a reputation for valour little less than his own. At the head of these followers, all like himself eager for possessions and plunder, De Courcy left Dublin (1177), and hurried northwards to the conquest of Ulster. His meditated incursion and his rapid march through Drogheda and Dundalk were alike unknown to the men of Ulster; and great was the astonishment of the inhabitants of Downpatrick, when De Courcy and his men marched into the town, and the

\* *Cambrensis*, pp. 277-82.

† Harris's *Ware*, Vol. II., p. 197.

‡ *Giraldus* only allows him a little more than 300 followers, but the *Book of Howth* (*Carew MSS.*, p. 84) allows that he fought his first battle in Ulster with 700 and the author is De Courcy's enthusiastic eulogist.

silence of its streets was broken by the tread of armed men and the clamorous notes of the military bugle. Their resistance could only be feeble and futile, and their property, and in many cases their lives, were sacrificed without a blow. Cardinal Vivian, who had come from Rome as Papal Legate, happened to be in Downpatrick on his way to Dublin, and endeavoured to curb the rapacity of the invaders. He offered, on the part of the Ulster chiefs, that they would acknowledge Henry II. as their sovereign, and pay him tribute, if De Courcy and his men would withdraw and return to Dublin. But his efforts were fruitless, and, finding that expostulation and entreaty were vain, he urged the Irish to organise in their own defence.\* Hastily gathering his forces together, MacDunleavy, prince of Uladh, encountered De Courcy near Downpatrick. His forces were vastly superior—10,000 in number—they were not inferior in valour, but the superior arms and discipline of the English compensated for inferiority of numbers, and after a hard fought contest, the Irish were defeated, and the English remained masters of Down. This victory De Courcy followed up by a greater one, on the 24th of June following, in which 1,500 of the Irish were slain; the same year he ravaged Tirowen and in a battle at Dalaraidh, defeated the King of that province.† His progress was steady and uninterrupted, and before the year had expired, he was firmly established at Downpatrick, which he made his headquarters, and where he had built a strong Norman castle.

The better to encourage his own troops and to strike terror into the natives, he relied on the prophecy of Merlin which foretold that Ulster would be conquered by a white knight, sitting on a white horse, and having the figures of birds graven on his shield, a description strikingly exemplified in De Courcy's case. He also carried round with him a prophecy of St. Columba, which foretold that a needy and broken man, a stranger from far countries, should come to Down with a small following and possess himself of the city,‡ and this description seemed to point to De Courcy. These prophecies of St. Columba were not so well known to be forgeries then, as they are now;|| the name of St. Columba was one to conjure with in his native Ulster; and it may be that many regarded resistance to De Courcy as hopeless, seeing that he was fated to succeed.

But it was not possible to stand idly by, while they were

\* *Cambrensis*, p. 279. Lanigan, Vol. IV., pp. 232-3. Lingard, Vol. II., p. 95.

† *Ware's Annals*.

‡ *Cambrensis*, pp. 278-80.

|| Reeves' *Adamnan*—Preface.



robbed and plundered, nor could it be forgotten that even if the prophecies had foretold De Courcy's success, they had also contemplated that the natives would resist him. And in the next year they were more successful than they had hitherto been. De Courcy entered Louth, intending to overrun the district, and was met with a stubborn resistance. Near Newry the combined forces of O'Carroll of Oriel and MacDunlevy met him, and he was defeated with the loss of 450 of his army. A little later, in the same year, De Courcy entered the district of Firlee, in Antrim, and returning south with a large prey of cattle, he was set on by O'Flynn, the chief of the plundered territory.\* Encumbered with his prey, his ranks were thrown into confusion, his troops were cut down by the Irish, who had lain in ambush and sprung upon them, and such was the loss he sustained, that he escaped to Downpatrick with only eleven survivors of that fight.† Such disasters would have broken the spirit of most men, but De Courcy's spirit was still unbroken. His attenuated ranks were filled by recruits from Dublin, needy, desperate adventurers, who were ready to join in any enterprise, and who in courage and military skill were not unworthy of the leader whom they served. From his central stronghold at Downpatrick, he made continuous raids on the neighbouring chiefs and carried on the desultory warfare of a robber chief, rather than any well-defined system of war. A combination of the Ulster chiefs would have crushed him, but neither the lessons of history, nor the dictates of prudence or patriotism taught them to combine; and with fatal shortsightedness, they carried on their contests with each other, as if no invader were in their midst. In the year 1179, the churches of Tirowen, from the mountains southwards, were left desolate in consequence of war and intestine commotion, and Ardstraw and Donaghmore were desolated by the men of Magh Ithe, and in the following year (1180), there were quarrels between the Clan Dermot and the Kinnel Moen.‡ A little later, the land which had withstood De Courcy was attacked by two Ulster chiefs, for Donal O'Loughlin and the Kinnel Owen of Tullahoge raided Uladh and defeated Mac Dunleavy and Cumee O'Flynn; and the men of Magh-Ithe plundered Firlee|| and carried off many thousands of cows. These wars weakened the native forces; the opportunity was not lost by De Courcy, and that he made progress appears from the fact, that an English colony was settled at Dunbo (1182),

\* *Four Masters:*

† *Four Masters. Cambrensis*, p: 281:

‡ *Four Masters.*

|| In Derry, along the valley of the Bann.

west of the river Ban, in Derry. This colony was attacked by the Kinnel Owen, but the Irish were defeated, and three years later (1185), Murtagh O'Loughlin was slain by the English.\* Invested with the title of Viceroy (1186), as well as Earl of Ulster, De Courcy transferred his residence to Dublin, and for nearly three years remained inactive. But his followers in Ulster were not so, and eagerly seized upon any opportunity that presented itself to increase their hold on the northern province. The English of Down,† joined by another neighbouring colony of their countrymen, made a raid into Tirowen (1188), and were carrying off a great spoil of cattle, but they were pursued by O'Loughlin and overtaken, and beaten in battle, though O'Loughlin himself was slain. The next year, a party of English entered Fermanagh and defeated O'Carroll of Oriel, and O'Mulrony, Lord of Fermanagh; the English were victorious and O'Mulrony was killed.‡

Henry II. of England died in 1189. His son, Richard, succeeded to the throne, but the new King paid no attention to Irish affairs. From its petty disputes and provincial wars he turned with contempt, and sought in the Third Crusade a wider field for adventure, and not even the bravest of the Frankish leaders was more feared by the Saracens, than was Richard, Cœur de Lion. While the English King fought on the sands of Asia, or languished in a prison, John had full authority at home; and one of his first acts was to displace De Courcy from the viceroyalty, and appoint Hugh de Lacy, the younger, son of the first Viceroy, in his stead.¶ The deposed Viceroy took up his headquarters at Downpatrick, married a daughter of Godred, King of Man, and for many years his life was one of danger and hardship, of forays and battles, of victories and defeats. In the northern province, he lived like an independent prince, kept a certain number of soldiers always in his pay, made war and peace on his own initiative, coined money, made grants of land, and all without any pretence of consulting, either the English king, or his representative at Dublin.\*\* His raids on the neighbouring chiefs have not all been recorded, but the first year of his return to Downpatrick, he plundered the churches of Armagh;†† and it may be assumed that many others of the northern churches were treated similarly. His progress to the

\* *Four Masters.*

† Of Moy Cova—now Donaghmore—midway between Newry and Loughbrickland, in the Barony of Upper Iveagh (*Four Masters*).

‡ *Four Masters.*

¶ Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 55.

\*\* *Ibid.* pp. 59-60.

†† *Four Masters.*

conquest of all Ulster, or even to the greater part of it, was barred by the ability of some of its chiefs, who, if they could have acted together, would have driven him from the province. But the death of O'Carroll of Oriel, who had been captured by the English, first blinded and then hanged (1193), and in the following year, the death of Cumee O'Flynn, De Courcey's old antagonist, removed two of his ablest opponents; and the quarrels between MacDunleavy of Uladh and the chief of Tullahoge (1196), smoothed his path to conquest, and enabled him to acquire territory and build castles in districts, which hitherto had not owned his sway. One of these strong castles he built (1197), at Kilsandle, on the east bank of the river Bann, and but a couple of miles from the present town of Coleraine. The governor whom he appointed in charge of this castle—one Russel \* by name—was of an aggressive disposition, and wishing to extend his power westward, he frequently sallied forth from the castle gates, plundered both the churches and territory of Tirowen, nor did he cease on one of these expeditions until he reached Derry. He was pursued by the prince of Tirconnell and Tirowen, Flaherty O'Muldory, overtaken at a place called Faughanvale, and defeated with the loss of many of his men, among the slain being a Tirowen chief, O'Loughlin, who had deserted to the English and joined in the plundering of his own countrymen. In the same year, Flaherty O'Muldory died (1197), and was succeeded in Tirconnell by O'Doherty. De Courcy judged the time propitious for one of his raids, and mustering an army, entered Tirconnell. He was opposed by O'Doherty, but the Irish were beaten, three hundred of them were killed, O'Doherty himself was slain, Innishowen was left at De Courcy's mercy, and, when he had wasted and plundered it, he returned to one of his strong castles. Again, in the following year (1198), he entered Tirowen and continued to ravage and plunder it, until he reached Derry, but its chief, Hugh O'Neill, unable to meet him in the field, effectually retaliated by attacking from the sea the English colonists in Antrim, on whom he inflicted serious loss.† To these evils which fell on Tirconnell and Tirowen there was added the further evil of quarrelling among themselves, but though they made war on each other they had the sense, at least for a time, to suspend their quarrels; and when the English made a descent on Tirowen (1199), Hugh O'Neill was able to meet them with large forces, and near Dungannon‡ the invaders were defeated with heavy loss, and those that remained were glad to escape with their lives.

\* *Four Masters*. By the *Four Masters* he is called Rotsel Piton.

† *Ibid.*

‡ At Donaghmore, three miles from Dungannon (*Four Masters*).



De Lacy, the younger, was but three years Viceroy when, like his predecessor—De Courcy—he, too, was removed from office. He retired to his own territory in Meath, which he governed with his own troops, and though, being nearer to Dublin, he was more subject to the authority of the English king, yet in his own territory he could scarcely be distinguished from an independent monarch. Perhaps it was the memory of being once Viceroy and of having lost the favor of a fickle prince, that brought De Lacy and De Courcy together, but it is certain that more than once they fought side by side and in a common cause—in 1196 against the English of Leinster and Munster, and a few years later in Connaught.\* In the interval, Petit and William Marshall, who, as joint Viceroys, succeeded De Lacy, were replaced (1194) by Pipard, and to him succeeded (1197) De Valois and (1199) Meyler FitzHenry,† these rapid changes showing that it was difficult to retain the favor of Prince John. By the death of Richard (1199) he became King, and De Lacy, who was something of a courtier, made efforts to ingratiate himself with the new king, nor was he very scrupulous as to the means he employed. Though he had acted sometimes in concert with De Courcy, he appears to have entertained but little regard for him, and was willing to compass his ruin, thinking it might serve his own ends. He represented to King John that De Courcy was disloyal, that he lived and acted as an independent king, and protesting his own loyalty and personal attachment to his royal master, he was believed and was appointed Viceroy (1203). And as soon as he was installed in his new position, he marched northwards with some troops, proclaimed De Courcy a rebel and a traitor, and having taken him prisoner, sent him under escort to England (1204), to be tried for his misdeeds;‡ De Courcy's estates were then confiscated, and De Lacy himself was made Earl of Ulster.

The subsequent history of De Courcy is unknown, though there were not wanting those who were ready to give it, and with many embellishments, so that his last years might be in keeping with his hitherto eventful career.|| It was said that he went to the Crusades, where he distinguished himself as few others could have done. It was said that he was restored to all his Irish estates, that he returned to Ireland, and died in

\* *The O'Conors of Connaught*, p. 81.

† Gilbert's *Viceroys*, pp. 56-58.

‡ De Courcy was surprised in the church of Down, while performing his devotions on Good Friday. He was unarmed, but snatched the pole of a cross from the head of a grave, and with this killed 13 of De Lacy's soldiers before he was overpowered. (*Viceroys*, p. 62.)

|| *Four Masters* at the year 1204 (O'Donovan's note).

Ulster. It was said that he languished in prison, in England until, before an assembly of the French and English kings and the notabilities of both countries, he was brought to take up the challenge of a French knight, whom he frightened out of the lists with one awful glance of his eye. But he was determined to show what he could do with his sword, and taking a piece of timber, he covered it with a helmet and coat of mail, and giving "such a grim look that strange it was to behold," he struck through helmet and coat of mail and embedded his sword so firmly in the timber, that no one could take it out with two hands, though De Courcy took it out with one. And when he was asked why he looked so terrible before he struck with his sword, he answered, "by St. Patrick of Down, if I had missed of this purpose, in striking such a stroke, that I would have slain both you Kings, and so many as I could more, and that you should never report of me anything more; and this for the old sores that I felt at your hands afore, and in defence of this French champion and mine honesty." \* A little of this may be true, most of it is manifestly false. What is certain is, that he accompanied King John to Ireland (1210), that he once more entered Ulster, in that year, that he enjoyed a pension of £100 a year from the English Treasury, and that, after 1210, his name occurs no more in the Irish Annals.† He appears to have died without issue, though the De Courcys of Cork claimed descent from him, and as such have claimed the somewhat unmeaning privilege of remaining with their heads covered, in the presence of the English king.‡

\* This is the account given by the *Book of Howth* (*Carew MSS.*), pp. 113-114. It is copied by Hanmer, who appears to believe it all, pp. 366 *et seq.* (*Ancient Irish Histories*, Vol. II.).

† Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, pp. 72, 500 502.

‡ *Four Masters*. (O'Donovan's note).



## CHAPTER XVI.

### *The O'Connors of Connaught.*

The position of Roderick O'Connor under the Treaty of Windsor.—Invasion of Connaught by the English—Quarrels among the natives—Roderick's troubles from his children—De Courcy's invasion of Connaught—Quarrels among the O'Connors—Cahal Carrach and Cahal Crovderg—Intervention of De Burgho—Death of Crovderg.

By the Treaty of Windsor, Roderick O'Connor ceased to be Ardri, in the older and more usual sense of the term, or, indeed, in any sense, for outside of his own native province he was destitute of authority. The pre-eminence assigned to him over the other provinces was shadowy and nominal; it was a mere concession to his vanity and pride, and intended, perhaps, to soothe in his adverse fortunes the bitter memories of the fallen monarch. The other native princes were directed to pay through his hands their tribute to the English king, but it does not appear that this provision of the Treaty was insisted on, for the English only wanted the tribute, and it mattered little through whose hands it came. Nor would the native princes be likely to voluntarily submit in anything to that king, who, almost without a blow, had allowed the sceptre of the High-King of Erin to fall from his nerveless grasp, and whose stupidity and imbecility had made the path of conquest so easy for the invaders. But within his own province of Connaught, Roderick's power remained and his position was clear and well defined. The tribute he was to pay to the English king was small, so small that its payment was scarcely felt, and as long as it was paid, Roderick might feel secure that within the limits of his native province, neither native nor English would contest his right to rule. But there were many amongst the invaders, who had not yet acquired those possessions which they so greedily sought. De Lacy had got Meath, Strongbow had got Leinster, De Courcy was hastening to the invasion and, as he hoped, to the conquest of Ulster, and some of his compatriots at Dublin asked themselves—Why should not Connaught also become



the prey of some successful adventurer. It does not appear that Roderick had violated any of his engagements with Henry II. ; his kingdom of Connaught was guaranteed him as long as he faithfully served that King, (*quamdiu ei fideliter serviet*),\* and there is no evidence that in any sense he had been unfaithful. Yet, in the face of these facts, the invasion of Connaught was resolved upon. A rebellious and unnatural son of Roderick—Morrogh by name—had quarrelled with his father ; in his chagrin he had hastened to the English at Dublin and asked their assistance ; and this was the pretext for the invasion. Their hope was that when the O'Connors were fighting among themselves, little resistance could be offered them, and the province would easily become their prey.

With the consent of the Viceroy, an army of 500 † was collected, and with Milo de Cogan at their head, these troops marched to the conquest of the western province. Milo was a tried and trained soldier, his abilities for command had been already proved at Dublin and elsewhere, and at the head of such troops as he commanded he believed that Connaught could be won. Cardinal Vivian had just presided (1177) at a Synod, at Dublin, and had published Adrian's Bull and commanded, through the bishops and abbots present, that the Irish should submit to Henry II., and this under threat of excommunication. The Irish in their wars with the English had been accustomed to store their provisions in the churches, so that within their consecrated walls their goods would escape the rapacity of the strangers. Vivian condemned the custom—and it must be owned that a church filled with corn and hay was little like what a church should be and ill-suited for the service of God—and he allowed the English in their wars to enter the churches and take what provisions they required, but they should compensate the owners for what they took. ‡ These proceedings were very welcome to De Cogan and his troops. They took little provisions with them, when leaving Dublin ; they relied on obtaining plenty in Connaught, for, if the fields and even the houses were to be empty, the churches at least would be full. But it was not Vivian's object to make it easy for the English to replenish their exhausted supplies at the expense of the Irish ; it was rather to prevent the churches from being turned into granaries and diverted from the sacred purposes for which they were built. And when De Cogan and his troops crossed the Shannon at

\* Cox: *Hibernia Anglicana*, pp: 29-30, where the Treaty is given in full, in the original Latin.

† *Cambrensis*, p. 283.

‡ *Ibid.*, p: 282. Lanigan, Vol. IV., p. 233.

Athlone, they found the churches empty,\* the villages deserted, the fields swept bare ; the people had retired into the shelter and solitude of the woods ; and on his journey westwards to Tuam, De Cogan passed through a deserted land. Nor could he find at Tuam, where he remained for eight days, either provisions or people, for that town also had been deserted, and without an enemy to fight, or food to obtain, De Cogan commenced his retreat back to Dublin. The Irish troops, who had hitherto remained concealed, now became visible and harassed the retreating army. At Ballymoe they attacked them in force, and though the English cut their way through, their loss was heavy. They were still pursued until they finally left the province, and when they reached the other side of the Shannon, greatly reduced in numbers, depressed in spirits, weak, way-worn and hungry, they bore but little resemblance to that army of 500 men, who, but a fortnight before, had crossed the Shannon and were marching to the conquest of Connaught. Among the prisoners taken by the Irish was the traitor, Morrogh O'Connor, and with the full consent of his father his eyes were put out, as the just punishment of his treason.†

In his desertion to the English, Morrogh O'Connor had got no support in Connaught ; chiefs and people held aloof from him, and to this is largely, if not entirely, due the success that followed. The Connaughtmen were taught how much unity and determination could accomplish ; the English were also taught a much needed lesson, and when Henry II. in defiance of all treaty engagements, granted all Connaught to De Burgho, that noble shrank from attempting the conquest of the province. But the unity of the Connaughtmen did not last ; neither did the O'Connors remain at peace with the other native chiefs. A quarrel arose between the son of Roderick—Connor Mainmoy—and Connor O'Kelly, chieftain of Hy-many, and a battle was fought (1180), called the "battle of the Connors," in which the losses were heavy on both sides, Connor O'Kelly and many of the chiefs of Hy-Many being among the slain.‡ The next year Connaught and Tirconnell went to war, and in the battle which ensued the Connaught forces were beaten with the loss of a large portion of their army. Concurrently with these events, there was war in Munster between Desmond and Thomond (1178), when the whole country was laid waste from Limerick to Cork. A little later (1182), Milo de Cogan was killed. Jointly

\* Giraldus says they took down the crucifixes and images of the Saints from the church walls and threw them before the English, so that the vengeance of God might fall upon them;

† *The O'Connors of Connaught*, p. 74.

‡ *Annals of Loch Ce*.

with Robert FitzStephen he had been granted by Henry II. that part of the kingdom of Desmond, westward from Lismore and southward to the city of Cork and the sea, the city itself being specially reserved to the King and garrisoned by royal troops. Either unable or unwilling to contest Henry's grant, Dermot MacCarthy, King of Desmond, allowed these two knights to occupy the lands named and to divide them, De Cogan's share being that nearest to the city of Cork. For five years he enjoyed his territory in peace, but on one occasion, as he journeyed to Waterford, he was set upon by a native chief—MacTyre—and murdered.\* His death encouraged the natives to take up arms, something like unity was temporarily established among them and the power of the English in Cork and its neighbourhood was nearly destroyed. But this unity was soon followed by division, and both in Munster and Connaught almost every year some fresh quarrel arose, which resulted in war.

For years before his death, the life of Henry II. was made miserable, and at length his heart was broken by the conduct of his children. It was the fate of Roderick O'Connor to have equally rebellious sons. His son, Morrogh, had brought the invaders into Connaught; he failed and was punished. His failure and punishment did not deter his brother, Connor Mainmoy, from being equally disrespectful to his father, but at least Connor had no desire to see his native province in chains, and perhaps it was because he felt that his father was unable to defend it, that he wished to depose him. To purchase peace, even for a little, Roderick entered the monastery of Cong (1183), but the life of a monastery soon ceased to have attractions for him, and he left Cong (1185). As Connor Mainmoy refused to surrender the throne to him, Roderick proceeded to Munster, obtained the assistance of Donal O'Brien, and at the head of an army, desolated the west of Connaught—both churches and territory. Peace was then made. Connaught was divided between father and son, but they soon quarrelled and Connor drove his father into exile, (1186), into Munster.†

Armed with the resources of the Viceroy and judging that the late wars had weakened it, De Courcy believed (1188), that the moment was opportune for an invasion of Connaught, and that at last that stubborn province would be subdued.‡ He estimated, that not only was its own strength exhausted, but

\* *Cambrensis*, pp. 283-6.

† *Four Masters. Annals of Loch Ce.*

‡ As usual he was invited by a native prince, Connor MacDermott, (*Four Masters*). The *Annals of Loch Ce* add he was accompanied by Roderick O'Connor.



he felt sure no help would come from Thomond, with which province it had so lately fought. His expectations were falsified. O'Brien had fought the Connaughtmen and even employed English mercenaries for the purpose, but he felt that the subjugation of Connaught by the English would be but the prelude to the conquest of Thomond. For a similar reason, Flaherty O'Muldory of Tirconnell came to the aid of the threatened province; and when De Courcy entered Connaught, and proceeding westwards, was robbing and plundering on his march, he learned with dismay that the united forces of Connaught and Thomond were approaching fast. Before this combination he judged it wise to fall back, and turning north he passed through Sligo to Ballysodare, intending to go still further and enter Tirconnell. Here he was confronted by a strong force under O'Muldory, who had advanced rapidly from Drumcliff, and, burning Ballysodare, De Courcy turned eastwards. Passing over the Curlew Mountains, he encountered the forces of Desmond and Connaught, at every step his men were cut down, and, by the time he reached Leinster, of that army which was to have conquered Connaught, but few remained, while Connaught was still triumphant and unsubdued.\*

At this period, it was evident that Connaught had at last an able and vigorous chief, that the sceptre of Roderick had fallen into worthier hands, and that the prospect before the province was that its interests would be safe-guarded, against either foreign or domestic foe. But treachery was again at work, and in the following year, Mainmoy was assassinated by a man of his own tribe, instigated by Connor's own brother. Once again the way was ready for domestic strife, and the flames of war were kindled. The vacant throne was contended for by Cathal Carrach and Cathal Crowderg,† the former being son of the murdered king, the latter a younger son of the great Turlogh O'Connor and therefore a younger brother of Roderick. To add to the confusion, Roderick himself once more claimed the throne. Pity for the fallen monarch and attachment to a venerated name induced some few clans to tender him their allegiance, but these clans were few and powerless.‡ The times required a strong hand at the helm; the enemies of Connaught were many; and he was ill-suited to be its king, who had never

\* *Four Masters. Annals of Loch Ce.*

† Put in English Cathal Crowderg, means Charles of the Red Hand, and the tradition was, that his red hand was caused by a sorceress and at the time of his birth. He was the illegitimate son of Turlogh O'Connor by a girl named Moran, from the district of Umhall, in Mayo. (*Four Masters*, anno. 1224.)

‡ *Four Masters*, 1189.

shown capacity, even in youth, and to whose natural feebleness of character there was superadded the feebleness of old age. Nor did he obtain help from the chief of Tirconnell to whom he appealed (1191),\* for that chief remembered that it was his lack of vigour and energy that had facilitated the English conquest of Ireland, and brought the miseries of foreign invasion, not only to Connaught, but to Tirconnell. He made a similar request to Tirowen; he even appealed to the English of Meath, but everywhere he was repulsed; nobody, English or Irish, wished to see him on the throne; and, disappointed and disgusted he retired to Cong where he remained until his death. But meantime the struggle was continued between Cathal Carrach, and Cathal Crovderg. To prevent the effusion of blood between relatives, and to save Connaught from the horrors of civil war, a conference was arranged at Clonfert, in Galway, and which was attended by both claimants to the throne. But even the influence of the Primate of Armagh, † who was present at their meeting, was unable to make peace; they could not be reconciled; they parted, determined to continue the war, and for a time Cathal Carrach triumphed and reigned, while Crovderg had to be satisfied with a subordinate position. It was during this period the English of Leinster entered Thomond and plundered it, as far as Killaloe. They were met by Donal O'Brien, who defeated them, pursued them into Ossory and inflicted a second defeat on them at Thurles. Two years later (1194), he died, and the English could rejoice at the disappearance of the ablest and the most persevering of their foes.‡

Cathal Crovderg, who had remained quiet for some time, again became restless and making an alliance with the English and Irish of Meath he marched into Munster (1195), where he burned several castles and took possession of Emly and Cashel. In his absence, a Connaught chief—apparently exiled in Munster—Cahal MacDermot—got together some forces, attacked Crovderg's possessions in Connaught and seized his vessels on Lough Mask, and plundered the neighbouring people, proceedings which compelled Crovderg to return from Munster, when he made peace with MacDermot, and shortly after with O'Flaherty of West Connaught (1197), who had made some attack on him. During these years, there were no quarrels, at least no battles, between Cathal Carrach and Cathal Crovderg, and when Roderick died at Cong (1198), it seemed as if they were about to be permanently reconciled and make peace over his freshly closed grave. But, in the

\* *Four Masters. Loch Ce.*

† His name was Tomaltagh or Thomas O'Connor: He was a relative of these princes; he died in 1201, (*Ware's Bishops*);

‡ *Four Masters*, 1192-1194.

next year, the quarrel was renewed and as Cathal Carrach proved the stronger, he drove Crovderg from the province. In this, he did not quietly acquiesce and making his way to Tirowen, he obtained the aid of its chief—Hugh O'Neill—and the men of Oriel. Cathal Carrach with the assistance of De Burgho, and the English of Limerick met them at Ballysodare, in Sligo, and Crovderg and his northern allies were defeated. In this expedition the ravages perpetrated by the army of Cathal Carrach and De Burgho were more than usually severe. From the Shannon westwards to the sea, they pillaged and destroyed everything, so that neither church, nor altar, nor priest, nor monk, nor canon, nor abbot, nor bishop afforded protection against them, and they stripped the priests in the churches and carried off the women, so that never before was Connaught so afflicted.\* Determined even yet to prevail, Crovderg obtained the aid of De Courcy and De Lacy, and with these, again entered Connaught and advanced as far as Kilmacduagh, where they were met and again defeated by Cathal Carrach. With the loss of three battalions out of five, the English retreated towards the Shannon, and at Rindown on the shores of Lough Ree, they were embarking for the other side, when the forces of Cathal Carrach again overtook them.† Those that had crossed were unable to help those on the other side, these latter were hemmed in and taken at a disadvantage, unprepared for the attack and dispirited by recent defeat, their resistance was feeble. Many were slain, many were drowned, few escaped, and the English were once again taught that Connaught was not a safe place to invade. Even yet, Crovderg would not acknowledge himself beaten, and two years later the fight for supremacy was renewed. On this occasion De Burgho was his ally, showing the readiness with which in these contests the English as well as the Irish changed sides. Perhaps De Burgho had some reason to think that Crovderg was at last about to triumph and he wished to be on the side of success, or, perhaps, it was because his soldiers were promised higher pay. The invading army entered Connaught, and passing through Tuam and Oran in Roscommon, established their headquarters at the monastery of Boyle. Their conduct was in keeping with the worst traditions of a mercenary army. They defiled the whole monastery, turned the monks out of their cells, left them only their dormitories and the house of the novices, and in the cloisters and in the hospital, and even in the church, there were enacted scenes of gross and shameful immorality, of which even savages might

\* *Annals of Loch Ce*, 1200:

† *Four Masters*, 1199.



be ashamed. Cathal Carrach with his Connaughtmen marched to meet his new foes, and while the two armies stood facing each other, he went to see some skirmishing which was taking place, and getting mixed up with the combatants on his own side, he was killed.\*

With his death the long contest for supremacy was ended (1201), and Crowderg was at last King of Connaught. In company with his ally, De Burgho, he marched westward and spent the Easter at Cong. Such an army as theirs, flushed with success, feeling that they were passing through a conquered district, must have perpetrated many evils on the natives, and invited that terrible retribution with which they were soon overtaken. Having no money with which to pay these English mercenaries, Crowderg, by agreement with De Burgho, had them billeted through Connaught, promising that after a time their wages would be paid. The conduct of mercenary soldiers in a land which has been conquered by their arms, is rarely anything but trying to the people among whom they live, and those soldiers had already shocked and disgusted the Connaughtmen. Their punishment was swift and terrible. A report spread throughout the province and was everywhere credited, that De Burgho had suddenly died; and, as if by mutual agreement, though it appears it was nothing but sudden impulse, the natives fell with fury on the soldiers quartered in their midst and in one awful night of retribution and murder, nine hundred English soldiers were butchered in cold blood.† De Burgho retired to Limerick, and the next year (1203), aided by the English of Munster and Meath, he entered Connaught, wasted the country through which he passed, desecrated and robbed the monasteries of Clonfert and Clonmacnoise, and for the first time established some settlements in the province and erected some stong castles.‡ A year later, he continued his career of desecration and plunder, and the churches of Tuam, Kilbannon, Mayo, Cong, Boyle, Elphin and many others suffered at his hands. In that year (1204), he died rather suddenly of a loathsome disease, it was said, and the Annalists attributed his sudden death and the disgusting disease from which he died to the wrath of the saints, whose churches he had desecrated or destroyed. ||

Without a rival in Connaught, or a powerful enemy such as De Burgho to contend with, Crowderg was able to assert

\* *Annals of Loch Ce*, 1202. *Four Masters*, 1201;

† *Annals of Loch Ce*, 1202. The *Four Masters* make the number killed (anno 1201) to be only 700.

‡ *Ibid.*

|| *Annals of Loch Ce. Annals of Clonmacnoise.*

his authority over the whole province, and when Hugh O'Flaherty of West Connaught proved troublesome and rebellious, he deprived him of his territory (1207), and gave it to his own son, Hugh O'Connor. But it was difficult to keep these turbulent Connaught chiefs within bounds, and the same year a quarrel arose, and a battle was fought between MacDermot and O'Mulroony, and when King John came to Ireland (1210), Crovderg went to his court, made formal submission to him, as his superior lord, on which occasion, it is said, that he surrendered two thirds of Connaught, keeping only one-third for himself, and for this portion he was to pay one hundred marks yearly.\* At a later date (1219), an attempt was made by Richard de Burgho to obtain a grant of all Connaught, but it does not appear that this application was acceded to, and when De Lacy of Meath crossed the Shannon (1220), and sought to effect a settlement in the western province, he was met by Cathal Crovderg and vigorously repelled, and the English castle erected was destroyed, so that till his death he was able to keep all his enemies at bay. In the last years of his life, he retired to the abbey of Knockmoy, in Galway, which he himself had founded (1189), to commemorate one of his victories, † and there, amid the prayers and piety of the Cistercian monks, he found rest after so much toil, and peace after so many battles. His death occurred in 1224. It may be truthfully declared of him, that he was one of the ablest of the O'Connor princes, and in contrasting him with his brother, Roderick, the regret must always be felt, that it was not the younger brother who was Ardri during those critical times when the Anglo-Normans first came.

\* Leland, Vol. I., p. 175. This statement is contradicted and I think satisfactorily disproved, by O'Connor Don (*The O'Connors of Connaught*, pp. 85-87). Crovderg is indeed under the King's protection, yet in the State Papers he is recognised as King of Connaught, and a record is in existence (in the year 1215) by which King John grants *all Connaught* to Crovderg, saving only the Castle of Athlone.

† It was called the Abbey of the Hill of Victory (*Collis Victoriæ*) and O'Connor Don states that the victory was gained over the English (*The O'Connors*, p. 92); but O'Donovan (*Four Masters*, 1224) could not discover when the battle was fought, or where, or against whom.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### *King John in Ireland.*

Character of John—His arrival in Ireland—State of the country—The English Colonists—De Braose and the De Lacys—The English possessions divided into counties—Introduction of English Law—"Modus tenendi Parliamenta"—John leaves Ireland.

KING JOHN was the youngest son of Henry II., and the best beloved by his father. Cold, calculating, suspicious, hating many, loving few, distrusting all, to John alone Henry was ever kind and indulgent, trusted him without reserve, and lavished on him his tenderest care. In Ireland (1185), John had brought the power of England to the verge of destruction; it was his folly, and that of his courtiers that was to blame, yet he was readily forgiven; the blame was cast on De Lacy and others, and blinded by partiality, the father would believe everyone was guilty but his favourite son. The disobedience of his children cost Henry many a pang; and it was his consolation to think that, in these revolts, John had no share; but in this he was destined to discover his error. In the last struggle of his life with the French King, (1187), his son, Richard, was on the enemy's side and so also were some of the Anglo-Norman barons. Unable to make headway against this combination, he had to agree to the terms of his adversary, and among the conditions of peace was one granting immunity for their acts to the rebellious barons. But Henry had the curiosity to know their names, and having procured a list, he was horrified to find that the first name was that of John. It was his crowning sorrow. He protested he did not wish to live longer, cursed the day on which he was born, and above all cursed his surviving sons.\* The unnatural son was also the unnatural brother, and while Richard was absent at the Crusades, John intrigued with the French King to have him deposed, and when Richard

\* Lingard's *History of England*, Vol. II., p. 118. Thierry, *Norman Conquest*, Vol. II., pp. 184-5.



fell into the hands of the German Emperor and was cast into prison, John sought to bribe the Emperor, so that Richard would never be set free.\* When John became king (1199), he was but thirty-two years old, but he was old in vice of every kind. To remove a possible rival, he murdered his nephew, to gratify his lust he divorced his wife and took Isabella of Angouleme, a younger and fairer bride;† his licentiousness was as great as an Eastern Sultan; and he had to count as an enemy many a powerful baron, whose daughter, or sister, or wife he had dishonoured. In one short but inglorious campaign (1206), he lost those French possessions, which, since the days of Rollo, had belonged to his ancestors, and not content with all this, he provoked a quarrel with the Pope and for three years had all England under interdict. Such was John and such his record when he came to Ireland, in 1210.

He landed at Crook near Waterford,‡ and so numerous was the army that accompanied him, that it was conveyed in seven hundred vessels. A quarter of a century had passed since he was last in Ireland, many changes there had been in the interval, but it could not be said that the affairs of Ireland, either from an English or an Irish point of view, were even yet in a satisfactory condition. Heedless of the dangers with which they were menaced, the Irish chiefs still continued to quarrel. The death of De Burgho and the establishment on the throne of Connaught without a rival of Cathal Crovderg did not bring continued peace to the western province, for two powerful chiefs MacDermot and Mulrooney went to war (1206); and the same, year O'Donnell of Tirconnell plundered two northern chiefs and was carrying off their cattle, when he was attacked and in the struggle that ensued many were killed and drowned. The very next year, that same O'Donnell ravaged Fermanagh, but was attacked and slain; and in a contest in Connaught, in which the MacDermots and O'Connors and the O'Mulrooneys took part, when O'Mulrooney was taken prisoner by his opponents his eyes were put out. The O'Donnells and the O'Neills were at war (1208), the MacCarthys of Desmond and the O'Rorkes were in each case quarrelling among themselves, and so also were the O'Briens of Thomond, and the next year the O'Rorkes of Breffni and the O'Mellaghins of Meath were at war. || In these contests among the Irish, the English were always ready to take sides, their object being to weaken and ultimately to destroy both the combatants; nor had they any scruple about

\* Lingard's *History of England*, Vol: II., pp: 122-3, 134-9.

† *Ibid.*, p. 151-2.

‡ *Four Masters*, at 1209 (O'Donovan's note):

|| *Four Masters. Annals of Loch Ce.*

changing sides, nor much regard for the binding force of treaties. Yet, though they made some progress, their progress was slow. The Irish had already acquired skill in archery, they avoided big battles and fighting much in the open, resorted more to stratagems and surprises, and this desultory and harassing warfare they found most effective for defence.\* But while it was true that English and Irish sometimes acted together in their wars and that in individual cases friendship had sprung up between them, yet the relations between the two races were not cordial and as time passed did not improve. The Irish regarded the new comers as plunderers of their property; the English looked upon the Irish as of an inferior race, despised them for their weakness and their divisions, and though they professed the same faith, they had little reverence for the churches which the natives had built, and plundered and profaned them so often, that the Archbishop of Armagh went specially to England (1206), to complain of their conduct to King John.†

In Dublin and its neighbourhood the same antagonism between the races existed, even in a more intense form than elsewhere and on one occasion at least it had tragic results. Peopled from Bristol, the inhabitants of Dublin had got a charter of privileges from Henry II.; these privileges were confirmed and even enlarged and multiplied by John, both before he became King and afterwards; and all the privileges and rights that had ever been conceded to the inhabitants of Bristol were conceded to those of Dublin and enjoyed by them.‡ From all imposts, from tolls and customs, from payment for right of way, over road, or bridge, or carriage way, they were free, and this throughout the whole extent of John's dominions; they could distrain the property of their debtors in Dublin, but, except in a few cases, were not liable to have their own property distrained; they were to have their city guilds such as existed at Bristol; in corn and wool and hides they were given a monopoly, and traders coming to their city could purchase these articles from none but citizens, and they were to have liberty to hold an annual fair at Donnybrook, which was to last for eight days, and to which the merchants of the city were bidden to repair.||

\* Cambrensis, p. 312. "Although they might at first have been easily subjugated, they became, in process of time, able to make a stout resistance." Evidently they were learning from experience—and from the enemy, though they did not adopt the use of armour.

† *Four Masters.*

‡ Gilbert's *Historic and Municipal Documents*, pp. 49-62.

|| It is impossible to say whether, at this early period, these fairs were characterised by those disturbances for which they afterwards became so famous.

Surrounded by a strong wall, which King John ordered to be strengthened still more, in possession of many privileges, enjoying to the full the favour of their sovereign,\* having in their midst his Viceroy, and sustained and defended by royal troops, the city prospered and the citizens grew rich. But all this only excited the more the envy of the dispossessed natives and whetted their appetite for revenge. Deprived of their properties, they had been driven from the city in which they were born and going to their countrymen throughout Dublin and Wicklow, they told their mournful tale. The O'Byrnes and the O'Tooles were warlike, they sympathised with the wrongs of their own countrymen, they meant to be even with the fat burghers, hidden behind the strong walls of the city, and all they wanted was an opportunity for vengeance. The opportunity came on Easter Monday, 1209, when the citizens joyously went forth to enjoy a holiday, a little to the south of the city at Cullenswood. In the midst of their festivities, the O'Byrnes and the O'Tooles swooped down upon them, the holiday makers were unable to offer much resistance to this unforeseen and unexpected attack, and three hundred of them were killed. The survivors made their way back to the city and told their terrible tale; and the day which commenced in joy was ended in sorrow and gloom. In the city annals, Easter Monday got the name of Black Monday, and the bitterest animosity was felt and long continued towards those terrible natives, some of whom dwelt near Dublin itself, and some out upon the Wicklow hills.†

The quarrels between the Irish chiefs John regarded with equanimity, but his mood was different, when it was the colonists themselves who quarrelled, and in the years that immediately preceded his visit their conduct was as bad as the Irish at their worst. A certain Meyler de Bermingham attacked the English of Limerick (1206), and took the place by force: the next year Walter de Lacy and Meyler FitzHenry were at war, FitzHenry was besieged in his castle at Ardnocker, in Westmeath, for five weeks and at last had to purchase peace by the sacrifice of part of his lands.‡ The insolence of the De Lacys both in Leinster and Munster was such, that a confederacy of the English of Munster was formed against them, headed by Jeffrey de Marais, or de Marisco, and a battle was fought at Thurles (1208), in which the losses of Hugh de Lacy, who was then Viceroy, were heavy.|| In these contests "all Leinster and Munster were brought to utter

\* The citizens showed their gratitude by supplying John's "man" with an official residence (p. 56),

† Cox: *Hibernia Anglicana*, p. 49. *Ware's Annals*.

‡ *Annals of Clonmacnoise*.

|| Gilbert's *Viceroy's*, p. 66.



destruction ”\* Such was the state of the English colony when John arrived. The De Lacys, he judged to be guilty, and, therefore, he pardoned Jeffrey de Marisco for his recent rebellion. Then he turned his attention to William de Braose, a powerful noble, whose possessions were extensive both in England and Normandy, and who for the sum of 5,000 marks had been granted some lands in Munster. But this money was not paid ; when his children were demanded as hostages, this also was refused ; and the wife of De Braose declared that her children would not be safe in the hands of King John. Her husband, on John’s arrival in Ireland, escaped to England and from England he escaped to France, where he died, his wife endeavoured to make terms with the King and offered him 50,000 marks for a free pardon for herself and her relatives. The offer was accepted, but she was unable to carry out its terms, she found she had only twenty-four marks of silver in her possession, and as this would not be accepted, De Braose, who then lived, was proclaimed an outlaw, and his wife and children flung into a prison at Windsor where they were starved to death. † Against the De Lacys, John’s irritation was little less than against De Braose. On his arrival in Ireland, or shortly after, Cathal Crovderg of Connaught and O’Brien of Thomond had tendered him their submission and offered their services if required ; their aid was accepted against the De Lacys ; and the unusual spectacle was presented of two Irish princes marching with an English king to suppress the revolt of two powerful English lords. From Dublin they marched through Trim and Kells, and Dundalk and Carlingford, until they arrived at Downpatrick. ‡ Both the De Lacys fled before them, the only stand their followers made was at Carrickfergus, but they were quickly overpowered and the place captured by King John. The De Lacys escaped to France, and in the monastery of St. Tarin near Evreux,|| they worked as brick-makers and gardeners, until finally, the abbot of the monastery interceded with King John, and Walter de Lacy (in 1215), was restored to his Irish estates on payment of a fine, and a little later—in the reign of Henry III. Hugh de Lacy also was pardoned and returned to Ulster.

The submission of the Irish chiefs left John no enemy to conquer except O’Neill and the northern princes and he made no attempt to conquer them, the flight of De Lacy and De Braose left him no rebels to chastise ; and, freed from the necessity of

[ \* *Annals of Clonmacnoise.*

† Gilbert’s *Viceroy*s, pp. 67-76, 506:

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 72:

|| *Ibid.*, p. 78. *Book of Howth* (Carew MSS.), p. 122. Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*, p. 50.

making war, he turned his attention to works of peace, and took measures to establish English institutions in those parts of Ireland, which had been subdued by English arms. Almost all Leinster and Munster and the greater part of Meath, John believed could safely be brought within the Pale of English law, and this wide extent of territory he divided into twelve counties, Louth, Dublin, Kildare, Meath, Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford, Waterford, Cork, Kerry, Limerick and Tipperary.\* In these counties he decreed that English laws and customs should prevail, English courts should be set up, English justices appointed, and that there should be sheriffs and the other necessary executive officers to carry out their decrees. The distinction of being the first to introduce English laws into Ireland is often claimed for King John, but this statement requires qualification, for it is quite certain that English laws and customs were introduced by his father. In the grants made to De Cogan and De Lacy, for instance, Henry II. reserves for himself certain knights' fees, a term entirely foreign to the Irish, or Brehon law, and equally peculiar to Feudalism, as it existed in England. To these reservations of knight's fees were incident—wardships, marriages, reliefs, aids for making the King's son a knight, and for the marriage of his daughter and "how could the King receive these incidents if the laws had not given him means to come by them which of necessity must be by sheriffs, officers of justice and other ministers, according to the course appointed ;" from all of which Ware concludes that Henry II. granted the laws of England to Ireland, erected courts for the execution of them, and for bringing in the profits of his grants—otherwise his reservations would be idle and fruitless.† What confirms these conclusions is that there is still on record a statute of the time of Richard III. (1485), which has reference to the electing of a viceroy, and which expressly professes to be nothing more than a re-enactment of a statute of the time of Henry II., or of Henry FitzEmpress, as he is called. This statute ‡ enacts that when—presumably through some sudden cause—Ireland should be void of a Viceroy, the great officers of state, the Lord Chancellor, Lord Treasurer and Chief Justice shall, with the assent and in council with the lords spiritual and temporal of Ireland, proceed to elect some noble to be governor, and who can hold parliaments and great councils,|| and that all this is to be

\* Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 74.

† Harris's *Ware*, Vol. II., p. 80.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

Besides the Parliament there were the *Great Councils* made up of the great men of the country, and which were called together in some sudden emergency ; the *Privy Council* which was executive and advisory,

done, "according to the tenor, usage, and execution of the statute of Henry FitzEmpress, and as is specified in the same statute."

It is further claimed for Henry II., that he ordered an Irish Parliament to be convoked, and that on his return to England (1172), he transmitted to Ireland a document ("modus tenendi Parliamenta"), in which he lays down that an Irish Parliament is to be called from time to time, how it was to be summoned, who were to be its members, on what it was to deliberate and what was to be the extent of its powers.\* In the order of dignity it was to consist of six degrees—the first, the King, or, in his absence, the Viceroy; the second, archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors and clergy, provided they held land equal to twenty knight's fees; † the third were the proctors of the clergy, two chosen as the representatives of each diocese; ‡ the fourth degree, earls, barons and their peers, such as had land to the extent of twenty knight's fees; the fifth, were the knights of counties selected by the county, and paid by the county which selected them, at the rate of a half mark a day for every day they were in attendance in parliament, but who were to exercise the franchise in their selection is not made clear; the sixth degree, were those selected by the burgesses and citizens of the towns. The King, if present, was to sit in the middle of the first bench, having at his right hand, the Archbishops of Armagh and Cashel, and on his left, the Archbishops of Dublin and Tuam, and in close proximity to them the other bishops, abbots, priors, earls, barons and their peers. Lower down, at the King's "right foot," were the Lord Chancellor and the Chief Justice, and at his "left foot," the Treasurer and Barons of the Exchequer, and in the last place, were the Proctors. Where the Knights of the counties and boroughs were to sit is not made clear and it does not appear that they were to hold their sessions separately, that is, unless a doubtful or difficult matter were to arise, when it was advised that each order should consider it separately. ||

but had no legislative authority; *County assemblies*—resembling a modern Grand Jury, or County Council—and lastly *Parleys* which were to discuss terms with native chiefs.

The Parliaments in the beginning were seldom held—only one in the reign of Henry II. and one by King John (Monk Mason's *Irish Parliaments*, pp. 14-18).

\* Harris's *Ware*, Vol. II., pp. 80, *et seq.*

† Equal to £400 a year.

‡ It was pretended in the 16th Century that the *Proctors* had only advisory but not legislative powers, but this was only after they had stubbornly refused to acknowledge Henry VIII's Spiritual Supremacy, then it was discovered that they had usurped *legislative* functions. (Monk Mason, pp. 16-22.)

|| Harris's *Ware*, Vol. II., pp. 82-3.



It is matter of doubt and controversy whether such a document ever came from Henry, but so great a man as Lord Coke declared that it was genuine, though Prynne and Selden are on the opposite side ; neither of these will allow it any greater antiquity than the reign of Edward III. Their arguments against it are not convincing and Ware would seem to incline to the opinion that Lord Coke was right.\* But whether this document was ever written, or not, whether any such parliament was ever held in Ireland in Henry's reign, and if so what laws it passed are matters impossible to determine now. What is much more certain is, that among the English in Ireland at that time there was more of lawlessness than of law. These adventurers had come to Ireland to acquire wealth and possessions, and they plundered the natives without scruple, and often with impunity. They were warriors only, and had the warrior's contempt for the delays and debates and arguments incidental to courts of law ; the law they respected and feared was the law of the stronger, and, when they quarrelled among themselves, they settled their quarrels by the short and stern arbitrament of the sword.

It was said that King John brought over from England some experienced lawyers, and that under their direction the whole machinery of government was established. In the counties recently formed, courts were set up, judges appointed and sheriffs and the other officers necessary to carry out the Court's decrees. Over all was the Viceroy, sometimes called justiciary, sometimes Lord Deputy, sometimes Lord Lieutenant and with him, as a Council, but subordinate to him, were the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Treasurer. The Lord Chancellor had the custody of the great seal† and in power and dignity was first and greatest of the judges. The Lord Treasurer was at the head of the Court of Exchequer, and had charge of the King's revenues, and fines and debts accruing to the King passed through his hands. The Parliaments held and the enactments passed from 1172 to 1310 we do not know, as the records are lost, but English statutes were of no avail in Ireland until

\* Harris's *Ware* Vol. II., pp. 83-4. This also is the opinion of Molyneux, (Case Stated, pp. 31, *et seq*;) he is quite satisfied if there was no Parliament in Ireland in Henry II.'s time there was shortly after (p. 36), Matt. Paris states positively that Henry held one at Lismore (1171) and that the English laws were *gratefully* accepted there. This can hardly be true of the Irish who did not know these laws, nor understand them ; but of course it would be true of the English settlers.

† Harris's *Ware*, Vol. II., pp. 98-9. The Lord Chancellor was appointed sometimes for life, sometimes during good behaviour, but more frequently during the King's pleasure.

they were confirmed by the Irish Parliament, nor had these enactments—even of an Irish Parliament—any effect, except in those parts of Ireland where English power prevailed.

The rule of Solon or Justinian is not what might be expected from a man with the base character of King John. He may be getting credit from historians for having done more in Ireland than he actually did, but at least this can be said that his conduct in Ireland, during his last visit, favourably contrasts with his record on the other side of St. George's Channel.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### *Long-Continued Turmoil.*

The English invade Tirowen—The Colonists quarrel—De Lacy and Marshall—Wars in Connaught between the O'Connors—The English intervene—Sufferings of the Connaught people—Richard de Burgho—Felim O'Connor, King of Connaught visits Henry III.—Maurice Fitzgerald—Condition of Desmond and Thomond—The O'Neills and O'Donnells quarrel—Their territory invaded by the English—The fate of Richard Marshall—Temporary and partial union among the Irish—Battle of Downpatrick—Discord in Connaught—Fitzgerald defeated in Desmond by MacCarthy—O'Brien of Thomond and De Clare—State of Tirowen and Tirconnell—and of Leinster—Quarrels among the Anglo-Irish lords.

ALTHOUGH no great event occurred for a few years after the departure of King John, yet, these years were not years of unbroken calm, and the first sound of battle came from the English themselves. The Viceroy was John de Grey, Bishop of Norwich, a man whom John had endeavoured to have appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, and for whose sake he had defied the Pope, and in punishment had his dominions placed under interdict.\* De Grey had little taste for the spiritual duties of the episcopal office, he was more at home in dealing with affairs of state, or on the battle-field, and wishing to do something agreeable to his royal master, and to signalise his tenure of office as Viceroy by some notable achievement, he marched north at the head of an army (1211), erected a strong castle at Clones, and from this entered the land of the O'Neills, hoping to conquer that land which as yet refused to submit to England. His success was not in keeping with his expectations; he was defeated by O'Neill with heavy loss and the next year O'Neill marched south and destroyed the English castle at Clones, and following up this success, he defeated the English at Carlingford.† The same

\* Lingard's *History of England*, Vol. II., pp. 156-7.

† *Four Masters*.

year, O'Mellaghlin of Meath defeated them, but in the next year his good fortune deserted him. He was defeated and the English were free to build, or rather rebuild, the castles of Kinnitty, Birr and Durrow,\* as well as a castle at Athlone. The events which fill up the next few years are unimportant, but in 1220, wars and battles again began and on that occasion it was the English themselves who quarrelled. When the De Lacy's fled from Ireland, part of Walter de Lacy's lands of Meath was given to William Marshall, Earl of Pembroke,† and after De Lacy's return to Ireland (1213), some of these lands were still retained. De Lacy considered himself an injured man, and only waited for a favourable opportunity to attack his rival and recover those lands, which he still deemed his own; and as his lands adjoined those of Marshall, a dispute about boundaries might easily arise and might be as easily converted into a cause of war. Marshall was able to enlist the support of the Viceroy, but Walter de Lacy had the assistance of his brother Hugh; they made in addition an alliance with O'Neill of Tirowen; and the strength of this combination was formidable. They first attacked the English at Coleraine and destroyed the castle erected there; then they marched south, and in Meath and, Leinster committed great havoc, and finally they met the combined forces of Marshall and the Viceroy at Dundalk. The latter had no less than twenty-four battalions under his command, yet they dreaded their opponents strength, and without giving them battle agreed to terms, in which De Lacy and O'Neill suffered no punishment and no diminution of their power; on the contrary O'Neill got his own demands.‡

Many as were the evils caused by these quarrels, they were light compared to what ills came upon the province of Connaught. While Crowderg lived there was peace, for no rival, either native or English, cared to question his supremacy. But when he died (1224), the era of peace was over, and a long and melancholy era of war and misery supervened. The dead prince had attained his position only after many and desperate struggles, and after his death these struggles were renewed, and in a more aggravated form. His son, Hugh, claimed the position held by his father; his cousins—Hugh and Turlogh, sons of Roderick—contested his claim and were able to obtain the assistance of O'Neill of

\* *Annals of Clonmacnoise.*

† William Marshall was son of William Marshall and Isabel, daughter of Strongbow and Eva MacMurrough: as the heir of Strongbow he was Earl of Pembroke, as the heir of Eva he was heir to Leinster, and therefore had enormous possessions. (Leland, Vol. I., p. 206.)

‡ *Four Masters*, 1221.



Tirowen, as well as two of the ablest of the Connaught chieftains, MacGeraghty of Roscommon and Hugh O'Flaherty of West Connaught. Entering Connaught, O'Neill marched by Athlone, until he arrived near Tulsk, in Roscommon, and on the old cairn of stones and earth in that neighbourhood,\* where for ages the Connaught Kings had been inaugurated, Turlogh O'Connor was proclaimed King. His cousin, Hugh, could make no effective resistance, for all the Connaught Chieftains had abandoned him, except MacDermot and his help was insufficient where so many enemies had to be overcome. In the belief that Turlogh was safe in his new position, O'Neill returned to Tirowen, leaving but a few of his soldiers in Connaught, to aid the newly crowned King. But Hugh O'Connor had inherited his fathers stubborn will, and had no intention of quietly acquiescing in his dethronement, nor did he care from what quarter he procured assistance, provided only he could humiliate his rival and attain pre-eminence himself. With that object in view, he repaired to the English headquarters and begged their assistance, and this was just what the English desired. Some years before this date (1219), Richard de Burgho had offered, if the whole of Connaught were granted to him, he would pay into the English Exchequer 3,000 marks at once and an annual rent of 200 marks in addition, or that the King of Connaught should be left part of the province during his life and that, at his death, the whole province should be given to De Burgho, and for this he offered the sum of one thousand pounds. Neither of these offers was accepted at that date, for in the next year, Cathal Croiderg was granted the King of England's protection in all his lands and possessions, for the space of five years. But when Cathal died, De Burgho's offer, or perhaps a larger one, was renewed and accepted and by letter (1226), Henry III. had directed his Viceroy—De Marisco—to take possession of Connaught for Richard de Burgho.† In this document it is easy to trace the hand of Hubert de Burgho, who was then Justiciary of England, who had therefore enormous power, and was using it in favour of his relative in Ireland.

Hugh O'Connor found the Viceroy, De Marisco, at Athlone. He had been an interested spectator of the quarrels in Connaught, believing it better to let the O'Connors fight it out, and then

\* It was situated at Carnfree, and the ceremony of installation was elaborate. It was attended by many bishops and by the principal chiefs or Sub-Kings of Connaught. O'Mulconry gave the new king his wand, Mageraghty received gifts of cattle and sheep from him, O'Flanagan was his High Steward, O'Flaherty and O'Malley had command of the fleet, O'Kelly Chief Treasurer, &c. (*The O'Connors*, pp. 83-4)

† *The O'Connors of Connaught*, pp. 88 et 95.

was the time for the English to intervene, when both parties were exhausted in the struggle. But he was reluctant that any side should triumph, at least without his aid, and after hearing Hugh O'Connor's story he determined to aid him, and with his own forces and those of O'Mellaghlin of Meath, he crossed the Shannon. Simultaneously with this, Hugh O'Connor had got the assistance of his uncle, Donagh Carbry O'Brien of Thomond, who had entered Connaught from the South, and the unfortunate province was at the same time wasted and spoiled by two different armies converging upon Roscommon. Against such forces Turlogh O'Connor and his allies were powerless, and, retreating westwards from Roscommon, they arrived at Kilkelly, in Mayo. The most inexperienced of their soldiers were placed in front to guard the non-combatants and to drive the cattle before them, while MacGeraghty and Turlogh and the more seasoned veterans of Tirowen were left to guard the rear, for the English were in pursuit and were near at hand. The pursuers hoped to surround the retreating army, but the retreat was conducted with ability and Turlogh and his men escaped by Swinford to the County of Sligo, without any serious loss. Some of the Roscommon clans, who sided with Turlogh, had fled on the approach of the English and arrived at Attymas, on the borders of Sligo, and instead of pursuing Turlogh's army Hugh O'Connor proposed that these helpless fugitives be attacked. His allies agreed and the miserable people, in their haste to escape, endeavoured to cross the river Bellacong, a tributary of the Moy. The current was swift and strong, numbers were drowned, and the fishermen who had their nets set in the river, found them on the following day filled with the bodies of infants, who had lost their lives in that fatal passage.\* Little less miserable was the fate of the remaining portion of the fugitives, who escaped northwards to Tirawley, where they were set upon by O'Dowda,† the chief of that territory, robbed of their cattle and left utterly destitute.

Hugh O'Connor and his allies, retracing their steps, set up their headquarters at Kilmaine, in Mayo, and thither O'Flaherty and Manus O'Connor were despatched on behalf of Turlogh, with the object of arriving at some agreement, knowing well it was useless to continue the struggle. O'Flaherty was pardoned, but only on condition that he deserted his present allies and even opposed them, and, besides, he was compelled

\* *Annals of Loch Ce* at 1225.

† O'Dowda was one of the chiefs of the Hy Fiacra clan and dwelt in the modern barony of Tirawley, west of Killala Bay and the River Moy, in Mayo: (*Book of Rights*, pp. 108-9):

to surrender the islands of Lough Corrib to the English, as well as the vessels he had on the lake. Necessity had compelled him to accept these hard conditions, which struck so fatal a blow at his power, but it appears he had no intention of carrying out what he had stipulated, and the English had only left the province, when he revolted to the son of Roderick, and again the English forces were recalled by Hugh O'Connor. A party of them who had encamped at Ardrahan, in Galway, were set upon by O'Flaherty and suffered severely, but again the English prevailed, Hugh O'Connor was recognised king, and O'Flaherty had to renew his submission and to give hostages for his future good behaviour. Champion of a losing cause, Turlogh O'Connor was abandoned by the Connaught chiefs, who had hitherto fought on his side, and again both himself and his brother sought for refuge in Tirowen. The English who had placed Hugh on the throne insisted on being paid by their ally, and compelled him to give them hostages until he was in possession of sufficient money to gratify their demands. After this period of slaughter and desolation peace was restored. The English in their march through Roscommon and Mayo had plundered everything, and left ruin and misery in their track; the steps of Donogh O'Brien, in Galway, on his march from Thomond, were similarly marked, and there was hardly a church or territory in Connaught that had not been plundered and laid waste. So many of the men had fallen in the war, that the gathering in of the harvest could not be attended to, and the winter passed and the corn was still uncut, nor was it cut, until St. Bridget's Day (1st February), of the next year (1226), when the crops were being put down for the succeeding harvest. Without corn or cattle, the people were in the last extremity of distress and large numbers perished of hunger; in the wake of famine, the horrid spectre of famine fever appeared, and Connaught seemed as a land accursed, a land of mourning and lamentation and woe.\*

It was about this date that Richard de Burgho assumed the title of Lord of Connaught. That he should be what his title indicated seemed to be a matter of concern to Henry III., or rather to his minister; it would be an extension of English power and such an extension seemed imminent. The English had already acquired settlements in Connaught, they had built strong castles on Lough Corrib, they were thus enabled to exercise an influence on its local affairs, and, best of all, the King of Connaught was their creature; it was they who placed him on the throne and, as they had put him up, they could as easily pull him down.

\* *Annals of Loch Ce. Four Masters:*



And with this object in view, he was invited to a conference at Dublin (1227), which was attended by the Viceroy (De Marisco), William Marshall and other English lords. In the preceding year, Hugh O'Connor had been directed by royal mandate to the Viceroy to deliver up the land of Connaught which he and his father had forfeited; he was directed, later on, to deliver it to Richard de Burgho, failing this, he was invited to a conference at Athlone and promised safe-conduct, and as he refused this invitation also, he was again invited in the next year to Dublin and was promised safe-conduct. This last invitation he accepted, but he soon found that treachery was intended; the Viceroy attempted to make him prisoner, but William Marshall would be no party to such treachery, and rescued Hugh O'Connor and brought him back safely to Connaught.\* In revenge for his treatment at Dublin, the Connaught king attacked the English at Athlone, burned their settlements there and took young De Marisco, son of the Viceroy, prisoner. His own son and daughter were already in the Viceroy's hands as hostages, or rather as prisoners, and, in exchange for the Viceroy's son, they were allowed to go free. Dissatisfied with Hugh O'Connor, the English took the sons of Roderick into favour. Richard de Burgho overran one part of Connaught, De Marisco marched to Roscommon from Athlone, and built a strong castle at Rindown, on the shores of Lough Ree, and Hugh O'Connor, unable to maintain his position, fled from Connaught to Tirconnell. The next year (1228) he returned to claim his throne, but at De Marisco's castle, whither he had gone for a friendly conference, he was treacherously assassinated† and the sons of Roderick possessed the throne of Connaught without a rival. But there were two of these princes; in the manner of their family, no two of them could agree; neither would yield to the other; and Connaught was harassed and plundered between them. In the end, Hugh succeeded, as he had the support of the greater number of the native chiefs, and also of the English. In the hands of these latter he was but a puppet and, two years later, when he showed some symptoms of independence, his territories were overrun by Richard de Burgho, he was expelled from Connaught and his cousin, Felim, son of Cahal Crovderg, was adopted by the English and placed on the vacant throne. Either the affection of De Burgho was fitful and capricious, or the new king was not sufficiently servile, but, whatever the cause, Felim was seized upon by De Burgho (1231), and im-

\* *The O'Conors*, pp. 95-96. *Four Masters* and *An. of Loch Ce* (1227).

† *Annals of Clonmacnoise*. That De Marisco did not approve of the act is shown by the fact that he executed the murderer, an Englishman.

prisoned, and his rival and cousin again became king. But the next year Felim was liberated, the struggle for supremacy was renewed, the native chiefs rallied to Felim's side in great strength, and though his rival had the aid of some English, yet he was defeated and slain (1233), and Felim was once more king.\* That same year, the son of Hugh de Lacy—William—invaded Breffni, but was defeated and slain by Cahal O'Reilly; and Felim O'Connor, flushed with his recent triumph, attacked and destroyed the English castles recently erected in Connaught, Galway, Donamon, Hen's Castle in Lough Corrib, and Hag's Castle in Lough Mask.

For a year or two the O'Connors ceased to quarrel, but apparently Richard de Burgho determined that Connaught should not be at peace. He had already overcome the O'Flahertys, dispossessed them of their territory east of Lough Corrib and driven them across to Iar Connaught, to that bleak and desolate region, which extends westward of Lough Corrib and Lough Mask and takes in the whole coast line from Galway to Clifden; † he had taken possession of the town of Galway, ‡ where he erected and fortified a strong castle, and from this as his headquarters he plundered Felim O'Connor's territory in 1235, and again, in the following year. The first of these years he was aided by the Viceroy, Maurice FitzGerald and De Lacy, Earl of Meath, and with these forces he crossed the Shannon, at Athlone, burned Roscommon and the churches of Elphin and Boyle, and in that part of the province spread ruin and desolation. They next proceeded to Munster, at the instigation of O'Heyne, a Galway chief, who had a grudge against Donogh O'Brien of Thomond and wished to be revenged on him. O'Brien was taken unprepared, but Felim O'Connor, hearing of his plight, went to

\* *Four Masters. Loch Ce.* The defeated prince was the last descendant of Roderick O'Connor, who could claim to be King of Connaught. (*The O'Connors*, p. 100.)

† From the fifth century to the thirteenth, the inheritance of the O'Flahertys was the present barony of Clare in the County Galway. Dispossessed of this by De Burgho, they in turn seized the district west of Lough Corrib, and dispossessed the ancient inhabitants of those regions. (O'Flaherty's *Iar Connaught*, p. 3.)

‡ Hardiman's *History of Galway*, pp. 47-8. Galway was fortified (1170) and held by the O'Flahertys. It was vigorously besieged by Richard de Burgho (1230), but the attack was unsuccessful. Two years later, the attack was renewed and the place captured from the O'Flahertys by De Burgho, who enlarged and strengthened the castle. The place was again attacked and captured by Felim O'Connor (1233), and the fortifications erected by De Burgho destroyed, but that persevering noble soon after recaptured it and re-fortified it, and from that date it was his headquarters and his greatest stronghold in Connaught.

his assistance and gave battle to the English, in which, however, the Irish were defeated with heavy loss. This action of Felim brought the vengeance of the English on his unhappy kingdom; they turned back to lay it waste and, feeling unable to resist them, he gathered together his cattle and provisions and with his immediate friends fled from Connaught to Tirconnell, leaving the whole province undefended and large part of it waste. Baulked in his purpose of plundering Felim O'Connor, De Burgho turned westward along the shores of Lough Corrib to attack Felim's relative, Manus O'Connor. He was joined by O'Heyne\* and O'Flaherty and to facilitate his attack on their countrymen, these two chiefs carried his boats by land from Lough Corrib to Killery Harbour, a distance of seven miles. O'Connor's people took shelter in the islands of Clew Bay, but De Burgho attacked them there, took away their cattle, killed the people, or took them prisoners, and the islands along the coast, from Clew Bay to Achil, were, with scarce an exception, the scenes of robbery and murder. Loaded with plunder, De Burgho turned back to Ballintubber, thence north-east to Ballysodare, in Sligo, which he also plundered, and finally, by the aid of some machines he had constructed for casting stones, he was able to capture the strong fortress of Loch Ce, near Boyle. When he returned to Galway, he left the people of Connaught "without food, raiment, or cattle," and, to complete the misery of the province, the Irish themselves were plundering and destroying each other. After this, peace was made with Felim O'Connor, but the next year, at a conference with the Viceroy at Athlone, treachery was planned against him; he was forewarned by some friend and succeeded in making his escape to Tirconnell.† The English set up one Brian O'Connor as king, but Felim returned from the north, the Connaught chiefs rallied to his side and he defeated and deposed the English-made king. The same year (1236), De Burgho again swept through Connaught, passing through Tuam, Mayo and Balla, and leaving Connaught "without peace or tranquility or without food in any territory."‡ Nor were the ills of the province yet over, for Felim's right to the throne was again challenged by the sons of Roderick O'Connor.

During these years the position of Felim O'Connor was one of enormous difficulty. Over the rivals of his own name and family he had asserted his superiority by force of arms, but the English were not so easily dealt with. They had already effected many settlements in the province, and in extent of territory and

\* O'Flaherty's *Iar Connaught*, pp. 50-51. O'Heyne's territory corresponded with the present barony of Kiltartan in Galway.

† *Four Masters. Annals of Loch Ce.*

‡ *Annals of Loch Ce* (1236). *Four Masters.*



power De Burgho far exceeded even the chief of the O'Connors. To Felim little was left but a few baronies round Roscommon, and a nominal sovereignty over the native chiefs, and for this shrunken territory and diminished power he had done homage to the English King, or rather to his representative, and he was paying an annual tribute. There was no suggestion that he did not pay this tribute regularly, or that he had been unfaithful to any of his engagements. Yet the Vicercy had more than once favoured his rivals and employed English troops against him, acting under the King of England's authority and in his name and De Burgho kept his territory in perpetual unrest, had robbed and plundered his friends, desolated his lands, pillaged his churches and chased himself, an exile and an outlaw, from the land and from the throne of his fathers. To appeal to the Viceroy—Maurice Fitzgerald—was useless, for he had taken sides with De Burgho; the only resource left was to appeal in person to the English King, and Felim for this purpose went to England. He was favourably received by Henry III. (1240) to whom he detailed all that he had suffered, laying all the blame on De Burgho, a safe thing to do then, for De Burgho's great relative—Hubert, Earl of Kent—had lost the King's favour. Impressed by what he had heard, Henry sent peremptory orders to his Viceroy, Fitzgerald, "to pluck up by the root that fruitless sycamore, De Burgho, whom the Earl of Kent in the insolence of his power had planted in these parts, nor suffer it to bud forth any longer."\* After that date De Burgho gave Felim no more trouble, and two years later (1243) he died. But Maurice Fitzgerald still kept Connaught disturbed. He plundered two Connaught chiefs, MacDermott and O'Flynn (1241); the next year, with Felim O'Connor as his ally he invaded Tirconnell, and two years later he erected a strong fortress at Sligo. Both Felim and Fitzgerald went to England with some troops (1245), and aided Henry III. in his Welsh wars. On their return, Fitzgerald was dismissed from the Viceroyalty and De Marisco appointed in his place,† but the change did not bring peace to Connaught. There were contests between the O'Connors and O'Reillys of Breffni (1243-4) and between a minor branch of the O'Connor family and the English (1247) during which Galway was burned.‡ Again, under Birmingham, the English were defeated at Sligo (1249) by Felim O'Connor's son, and in the same year, perhaps in revenge, the Viceroy and Fitzgerald deposed Felim and set up his nephew Turlogh in his place. The new King soon quarrelled with his patrons and went to war with them, but at Athenry he

\* Matt. Paris, Vol. I., p. 297.

† Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 102.

‡ *Annals of Loch Ce*.

was defeated with heavy loss by Jordan de Exeter, the English Sheriff of Connaught.\* The next year (1250), Felim returned from Tirowen, defeated his nephew Turlogh, and making peace with the English was again recognised as King. A little later (1253), he was at war with the O'Reillys of Breffni and again, two years later, on this latter occasion in alliance with Walter de Burgho, the son and heir of his old enemy, Richard. To the dismay of Felim, who had been so long his faithful subject, Henry III. granted "500 librates" of land in Connaught to one Godfrey de Lusignac, but the Irish prince remonstrated, the grant was withdrawn and an agreement was entered into (1256), by which Felim undertook on his part not to molest any of the English in their possessions, while on the other side the integrity of his own dominions was guaranteed by the Viceroy, De la Zouch.†

Compared with Connaught, alternately desolated by English noble and Irish chief, and in which the tumult of war was seldom hushed, the state of Munster, during these years, was one of peace. Yet there were many elements of discord and turmoil within its bounds. In accordance with the terms of submission made by Donogh O'Brien to King John,‡ there was an English castle built at Killaloe (1215), by Jeffrey de Marisco which, like other castles of its kind, was to serve for the invaders as a retreat in danger and a rallying point for attack. The grandson of that Maurice Fitzgerald, who had come over with Fitzstephen, had granted to him by mandatory letter of Henry III. (1216), besides the castle and lands of Maynooth, the castle and lands of Croom, in Limerick, but lately the paternal inheritance of the O'Donovans;|| early in the thirteenth century the Fitzgeralds had gained a strong foothold in Desmond, and the position of De Burgho at Limerick was near and his forces strong. The ancient jealousy between the O'Briens of Thomond and the MacCarthys of Desmond still survived and the strength of each of these families was often dissipated by faction and discord and petty ambition; and to carry their point these princes, like the O'Connors of Connaught, were always ready to call the English to their aid. In 1225, Donogh O'Brien and De Burgho fought side by side in Connaught, but ten years later they were opposed and De Burgho had many native soldiers in his ranks.\*\* Some years later (1249), MacCarthy of Desmond made war on the English

\* *Annals of Loch Ce.*

† *The O'Connors of Connaught*, p. 107.

‡ *White's History of Clare*, p. 124.

|| *Four Masters* at 1224 (O'Donovan's note).

\*\* *Ibid.*, 1235. One of these was O'Helyne, "who wished to be revenged on the Mononians and on Donogh Caribry O'Brien."

and inflicted heavy loss on them but the next year that energetic prince was murdered, it was thought, by an Irish hand.\* Again (in 1257), Connor O'Brien of Thomond attacked Fitzgerald and the English and defeated them at Feakle in Clare, but, in the same year in some factionist contest, he was defeated and slain, being succeeded by Brian Roe O'Brien. In the meantime Fitzgerald had made progress in Desmond, for he was able to found and endow with lands (1253) a monastery at Ardfert, near Tralee.†

Tirconnell and Tirowen had long been rivals and enemies, and it is noticeable that while the sons of Roderick O'Connor in their distress found an asylum with O'Donnell, their rivals sought for shelter in Tirowen. Such a state of things would furnish the English with an opportunity to interfere and conquer, but they had already tried conclusions with Hugh O'Neill and had been badly worsted in the contest, and while he lived neither the jealousy of Tirconnell nor the cupidity of the English disturbed the tranquility of his province. But after his death (1230), the sceptre passed into less capable hands, and his successor, Donal O'Loughlin, aided by the English, entered Tirconnell (1232), which he wasted and plundered only, however, to have his own province overrun by O'Donnell in the same year. Four years later, O'Donnell again marched eastward and got at least temporary submission from most of the northern chiefs.‡ The English believed the opportune time to interfere (in 1238), had come and the Viceroy, Maurice Fitzgerald, aided by De Lacy, entered Tirowen and Tirconnell, deposed Donal O'Loughlin, and put in his place a nominee of their own—Brian O'Neill—got hostages from Tirconnell and the other lesser provinces, and at last the English might boast that they had planted themselves firmly in these provinces, which had withstood their arms so long.|| Quarrels soon arose between O'Loughlin and O'Neill for the supreme position in Tirowen and were continued with varying success until O'Neill invoked and obtained the aid of O'Donnell and fought, near Maghera, in Derry, an obstinate and bloody battle in which O'Loughlin was defeated and slain, and Brian O'Neill (in 1241) became ruler of Tirowen. Maurice Fitzgerald, having vastly increased in power, had built a strong castle at Sligo and from its shelter made frequent incursions into Tirconnell until finally, by the aid of some of the O'Connors of Connaught, he fought with O'Donnell the battle of Ballyshannon

\* *Annals of Innisfallen*, quoted by O'Donovan, note to *Four Masters* at 1250.

† *Four Masters*.

‡ *Ibid.*

|| *Ibid.*



(1247), where O'Donnell was outmanœuvred and defeated and himself and many of his followers killed. Fitzgerald was then enabled to play the part of kingmaker, and one Rory O'Cannannan was made chief of Tirconnell. But the allegiance of his nominee was shortlived or, perhaps, his own favour was not continued; Godfrey O'Donnell solicited Fitzgerald's aid and O'Cannannan was defeated and slain. Tirowen was then entered by the Viceroy. De Marisco, and its submission was obtained, the Irish deeming it wiser to peacefully submit than to have recourse to arms, as they felt that "the English had at that time the ascendancy over the Irish."\* Fitzgerald again invaded and wasted both Tirowen and Tirconnell (1250); O'Neill and O'Donnell were at war (1252), and Fitzgerald and O'Neill (1253), in which O'Neill was victorious, inflicted much loss on Fitzgerald and demolished many of the English strongholds in the north.† A few years later (1257), a determined effort was made by the English to finally crush the power of Godfrey O'Donnell, and for this purpose the Viceroy and Fitzgerald united their forces. Such a combination must have been formidable in its strength, yet O'Donnell put forth his best efforts and, unaided, except by the enthusiastic clansmen of Tirconnell, he met the English at Drumcliff (in Sligo), fought a desperate and long contested battle and finally prevailed, though he himself was severely wounded, as was also his enemy Fitzgerald, whom it is said he met in single combat.‡ This heroic conduct of Godfrey O'Donnell entitled him to the best thanks of every Irish chief, for, in defeating the English, he was defeating their enemies as well as his own, and in his illness he deserved the sympathy of his neighbour, O'Neill. But these Irish chiefs had no country but their clan, and instead of rejoicing O'Neill was displeased at the success of O'Donnell, thinking, no doubt, that so great a victory cast the greatness of Tirowen into the shade. Believing that Tirconnell was at his mercy, its forces weakened, its chief ill and unable to lead them, he despatched messengers to O'Donnell demanding hostages. O'Donnell was seriously ill, but he disdainfully refused to yield, told these messengers of an ungenerous chief that Tirconnell was still able to defend herself, bade his clansmen assemble from all quarters and, borne upon his bed which he felt would soon contain his corpse, he went with his clansmen to battle. On the banks of Lough Swilly the two armies met. The battle was fierce and soon decided in favour of O'Donnell, but on the return

\* *Four Masters.*

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.* The men of Tirconnell pursued the English to Sligo and burned and plundered that town.

to Tirconnell, at a place near Letterkenny, the litter on which O'Donnell was carried was laid down and the heroic chieftain expired.\*

Had the various English chiefs—De Burgho, FitzGerald and the rest—united under a single leader, with their superior forces and superior arms, they would quickly have overborne the Irish, and the native chiefs, lacking unity and cohesion and fighting only for themselves, would have fallen one by one. This would probably have happened if Ireland and England were far apart. But the two islands were near, so near that it was dangerous for an English subject to successfully revolt against his king as De Courcy in his day had found ; yet, so far apart that successive English Kings had paid but little attention to Irish concerns, had never effectually conquered it, and had left their Viceroy at Dublin insufficiently supported, while a number of powerful barons, impatient of control, despising the feeble authority of the central government, had gradually and imperceptibly risen to the position of independent rulers. Intent on the acquisition of wealth and lands, they made peace and war as they pleased ; if they united it was not for the English King's interests but for their own ; even their own countrymen they did not spare ; and in their treatment of Richard Marshall, such was their unbounded rapacity, that they shamefully combined for the purpose of spoliation and murder. This young man was the son of William, Earl Marshall, who in the early part of Henry's reign held the position of guardian of the kingdom and whose ability and energy, more than anything else, had driven the French out of England, and placed Henry without a rival on the throne.† Through his mother, Isabel, daughter and heiress of Eva and Strongbow, Richard had vast estates in Ireland—almost all Leinster was his. Sharing the dissatisfaction and even disgust of the English barons at the number of Henry's French favourites, he rose in revolt in Wales (1230), but as Henry made some promises of amendment, hostilities were suspended, and during this interval of peace, Richard went to Ireland. It was against the ruling English minister, the Bishop of Winchester, more than against the King himself, that Richard Marshall had risen in arms,‡ and this minister resolved to have his revenge. Letters under the King's seal and bearing the signature of the minister himself were addressed to Hugh and Walter de Lacy, Richard de Burgho, Geoffrey de Marisco and

\* *Four Masters* at 1258. He was succeeded by Donal Oge O'Donnell.

† Lingard, Vol. II., pp. 189 *et seq.*

‡ Leland's *History of Ireland*. Vol. I., p. 212. So much was this so, that whenever Henry led the army in person Marshall would not oppose him ; his opposition and enmity were for the foreigners;

Maurice FitzGerald warning them that Marshall had been banished from the realm and his estates forfeited and that, on his landing in Ireland, they should capture him alive or dead, and in return for this service they were to obtain possession of all his lands.\* These English lords were quite ready to compass the young man's ruin on such favourable terms, and when he landed in Ireland De Marisco pretended to be his friend, applauded him for his rebellious conduct in England, and assured him such was his popularity and influence in Ireland, that if he raised the standard of revolt he would easily defeat the King's forces, recover his own castles, some of which had been already seized by the King's officers, and might one day extend his power, not only over Leinster, but over Ireland. Hastily mustering some troops, he overran much of Leinster and even captured Limerick, while Fitzgerald, De Buigho and his fellow-conspirators offered but a feeble resistance, for their object was to lure the young man to his ruin. Desiring, they said, to stay the effusion of blood, they proposed a friendly conference which was held on the plain of Kildare. On one side was Marshall and De Marisco, on the other Fitzgerald, De Buigho and De Lacy. Marshall had only fifteen followers—from Wales—his ally and friend de Marisco, had eighty, while on the other side were one hundred and forty armed men. During the conference De Marisco advised Marshall not to make terms but to fight it out, not to agree even to a suspension of hostilities, and when this advice was adopted, he coolly told him that he could not fight against his relatives, the De Lacys, and marched away with his followers, leaving Richard but 15 men to meet the attack of 140 men.† Even then he disdained to yield, and telling his younger brother, Walter, to make his escape—as he did—he prepared to meet the enemy's attack. His followers were soon cut down and himself severely wounded and carried off a prisoner to one of Fitzgerald's castles, where a treacherous surgeon was called to attend him, and poison finished the work which the sword had left unfinished. Yet the conspirators benefited little by their treachery, for an outcry was raised both in Ireland and in England; the King was forced to disown his share in the plot, and to swear that his signature had been forged; and the brother of the dead Earl was invested with all his honours and estates.‡

\* Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 95. It appears the King's Seal was stolen from the Chancellor and used without the King's knowledge, and to that extent he was innocent.

† Matthew Paris, who has narrated these events in detail, is specially severe on De Marisco, whom he names Achitophel. (Vid. *Ware's Annals*).

\* Leland, Vol. I., pp. 213-18. Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 97. *Four Masters* at the year 1234, the date at which these events happened.



When the second half of the thirteenth century opened, the position of the native Irish was critical, and the indications were that their final subjugation was near. In Desmond the MacCarthys were making a gallant stand, but the frowning castles of the Geraldines were placed firmly in their midst and were a standing and perpetual menace to their freedom. The English castles of Killaloe and Bunratty and the occupation of Limerick warned the O'Briens that in Thomond their power and territories were curtailed. Connaught trembled and suffered under the affliction of De Burgho, and its native chiefs were alternately his enemies or his slaves. The northern province, so long secure against the invader, at last had tasted defeat at his hands, and the waves of invasion and even of conquest had swept over Tirconnell and Tirowen. The various chiefs, disunited and alone, fought their own battles and had not yet advanced beyond the condition of the Britons in the time of Tacitus, of whom he complacently observed, that while they fought separately all were overwhelmed.\* Feeling that unity of action was essential, if their freedom was to be maintained, O'Brien of Thomond, Felim O'Connor and O'Neill had a conference (1258), at which O'Neill was proclaimed supreme king, and the others professed their willingness to aid him. But the conference was incomplete, for it was not attended by MacCarthy of Desmond, and O'Donnell of Tirconnell held sullenly aloof. The injury done to his province by O'Neill was recent, his recollection of it was bitter, and he had neither the magnanimity nor the patriotism to forgive. Nor is it quite certain that O'Brien submitted himself to O'Neill. His family historian denies that he did,† that it would be a shame for the descendant of the great Brian to hold a subordinate place, and what supports this statement is that in the war which followed, the forces of Thomond were not arrayed under the banners of O'Neill. The new alliance was shortlived and barren of useful result. It perished on the fatal field of Downpatrick (1260), where the English defeated the Irish under O'Neill and Felim O'Connor, and in which O'Neill himself and many of the chiefs of Ulster and Connaught fell.‡ The usual result followed. De Burgho ravaged Connaught and O'Donnell revenged himself on Tirowen. Two years later, the Viceroy and De Burgho plundered the Roscommon portion of Connaught, while O'Connor retaliated by attacking the English settlements in South Connaught and killed all the English who were able to bear arms,

\* *Agricola*, Cap. XII. "Singuli pugnantes universi vincuntur."

† *White's History of Clare*, p. 127.

‡ *Four Masters*. Of one family, the O'Kanes, fifteen chiefs fell.

from Tuam to Athlone, and when this slaughter and pillage were effected on both sides, he and De Burgho made peace, and in the quaint language of the *Four Masters*, slept in the same bed, cheerfully and contentedly;\* but such was the instability of their friendship, that they were again at war next year. Felim O'Connor died (1265), and was succeeded by his son, Hugh, who made his "royal depredation in Offaly,"† so that it appears one of those chiefs commenced his reign by robbery, and that such was considered honorable and expected. This Hugh was a man of energy and for the few years that he reigned he fought many battles and destroyed many English castles, nor was his right to rule seriously questioned by any member of his own family.‡ But when he died (1274), the O'Connors again commenced to quarrel; the position of chief was sought for by a crowd of claimants among whom a man of eminence is sought for in vain. For forty years these feuds continued, and raids and robberies and faction fights and murders make up the history of Connaught. In 1278, a bastard, Hugh O'Connor, was King, two years later he was killed and Cahal took his place; in 1288, after another series of quarrels, Manus became King, and in 1293-96, and again in 1306, the Annals have little to say of Connaught except that the O'Connors were at war; and the years that followed, up to the battle of Athenry (1318), were but a repetition of the previous years.|| To these wars may be added, that the O'Rorkes and O'Connors were at war (1266); the Welshmen of Tirawley—the Barrets and Cusacks (1281); the MacRannell of Leitrim (1302); the O'Kellys of Hy-many and MacDermot (1308), and the O'Connors and MacDermot, in the following year.\*\* If we add, further, that Connaught was plundered by Fitzgerald (1269), by De Burgho (1270-86 and 91), and that De Burgho (in 1310), quartered his soldiers on the natives levying bonaght, in the manner of the ancient Irish chiefs,†† we can form some idea of what Connaught endured, wasted by domestic factionist and foreign plunderer, whose people were strangers to peace or law, and whose property and lives were so wantonly sacrificed to cupidity and ambition.

The history of Desmond during these years is soon told.

\* *Four Masters*, 1262. Both O'Connor and De Burgho were nearly related. (Vid. O'Donovan's note.)

† *Annals of Loch Ce*.

‡ *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, 1274;

|| *The O'Connors of Connaught*, pp. 117-37.

\*\* *Four Masters*. *Loch Ce. An. Clonmacnoise*.

†† *Annals of Clonmacnoise*. The De Burgho in question was William a cousin to Richard, Earl of Ulster.

Fineen MacCarthy long held his own against his powerful neighbours, the Geraldines, but a determined effort was made to crush him, and Fitzgerald in his attack was aided by the Viceroy and De Burgho. The battle was fought (1260), at Greencastle in Kerry.\* The chiefs of Desmond gathered round MacCarthy, and the English were defeated with great slaughter, several of the Fitzgeralds being killed; and so many castles were destroyed, and common soldiers slain, that, for the space of twelve years, Fitzgerald lived merely on sufferance and was unable to put a plough in the ground.† De Burgho again attacked Desmond (1262), but was defeated; Fineen MacCarthy soon died, or was killed; Fitzgerald recovered his position; and the MacCarthys must have sunk into impotence and obscurity, as they disappear almost completely from the native Annals. Not content with attacking Desmond, Fitzgerald also attacked Thomond (1273), and obtained submission from the ruling prince, Brian, and about the same time there came to the district an English nobleman—De Clare—who had got from Edward I. large grants of land in Thomond. A quarrel was then raging between two of the O'Briens, and one of them—Brian—to obtain the support of De Clare, surrendered to him Tradree, a strip of land along the Shannon. They became sworn friends, and, to add to the solemnity of their oaths, some of the blood of each was taken and mixed together in a vessel, a peculiarly solemn form of sanction to their engagements.‡ Yet, no sooner did De Clare feel his position secure than he treacherously seized Brian (1277), had him tied to the tail of an untrained horse and thus cruelly tortured him to death. Vengeance speedily overtook the assassin. The O'Briens suspended their quarrels, and fiercely turning on De Clare defeated him at Quinn (1278), pursued the retreating soldiers even into a neighbouring church, burned the church over their heads, pursued the remainder across the Shannon to Slieve Bloom, wrung from Fitzgerald, who had aided De Clare, possession of his castle at Roscommon, captured all De Clare's possessions, except the castle of Bunratty, and left him nothing else that he could call his own within the wide domain of Thomond.|| For many years after that date the province enjoyed peace, but when the ruling prince, Turlogh, died (1306), quarrels arose as to the succession, the English took sides, and what seems strange, while De Burgho fought on one side, De Clare was on the other. These wars continued

\* *Four Masters*. The battle was fought five miles east of Kenmare.

† Hanmer, p. 400, who declares that the "Carties played the devils in Desmond."

‡ *Annals of Clonmacnoise*.

|| White's *History of Clare*, pp: 132-3;



for more than ten years, and Thomond presented a spectacle of turmoil and strife which recalls and equals the quarrels of the O'Connors.

The ancient enmity was continued and even seemed to increase between Tirconnell and Tirowen. The O'Neills invaded Tirconnell (1275), and desolated much of it, but at, or near, Newtownstewart they were encountered by Donal Oge O'Donnell and were defeated, losing "men, horses, accoutrements, arms and armour."\* As if waiting to consolidate their strength, both sides remained at peace for six years, and again their quarrels were renewed. Tirowen was aided by the Ulster English and at Desertereight (in the barony of Dungannon), Tirconnell was overthrown with great loss, Donal Oge O'Donnell being among the slain. These wars weakened the capacity of both provinces for resistance, and Richard de Burgho, Earl of Ulster, marched north (1286), and compelled O'Donnell to submit, and was able to depose the chief of Tirowen, Brian O'Neill, and put a creature of his own, Nial O'Neill, in his place.† As if to complete the ruin of their territories, quarrels arose as to the succession (1290), both in Tirconnell and Tirowen, the weakened provinces, no longer able to resist, were next year invaded by De Burgho, who pulled down one O'Neill and put up another, and who was enabled to plunder Tirconnell with impunity, and he "plundered the entire country both church and territory," and he did not leave a cloth upon an altar, nor a mass-book, nor a chalice in the churches of Kinel-Connell.‡ There were fresh quarrels between the O'Donnell princes (1295), and again, eight years later, these quarrels were renewed. The result was easy to foresee. De Burgho swept through Tirconnell (1305), and far north, in the ancient territory of Innishowen, he planted an English Colony and built a strong castle at Moville.

By this time the fairest portion of the ancient Kingdom of Leinster was exclusively in English hands, but there was still a MacMurrough, who claimed to be the lawful representative of its ancient kings. His possessions, compared to those of his ancestors, were small, but his spirit was unbroken, and in his territory at Wicklow, so great were his resources, that he was able (1276), to inflict a crushing defeat on the English Viceroy, De Geneville, in the passes of Glenmalure. || Surrounded by powerful English lords—the Fitzgeralds and Birminghams—O'Connor still maintained his independence in Offaly, but its

\* *Four Masters.*

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Annals of Loch Ce.*

|| *Annals of Clonmacnoise.* The English were reduced to such straits that they had to eat their horses:

ruling chief, in an evil hour for himself, trusted the honour of Birmingham, who in the guise of friendship invited him and his chiefs to a banquet at his castle in Kildare (1305), and then had them all foully murdered; and in consequence ever afterwards bore the name of "the treacherous baron."\* The ancient family of O'Mellaghlin still ruled in Meath, and though its chiefs had not inherited all the lands, they had inherited the vigour of their ancestors. Art O'Mellaghlin could boast at his death (1283), that he had destroyed twenty-seven English castles in Meath,† and his successor, Carbry, was not less vigorous and energetic, and when Butler of Ormond, Birmingham, Fitzgerald and De Geneville—the heir of Walter de Lacy—united in one powerful confederacy for his destruction, he met them with undaunted front and hurled back their forces in defeat.‡ And when the assassin's hand of his countrymen, MacCoghlan, struck him down (1290),|| there was no one, either native or foreigner, to question the right of another O'Mellaghlin to succeed.

The numerous wars and battles between the Irish and English and between the Irish themselves had inflicted many miseries on the inhabitants, both of Irish and English descent. To these wars must be added the wars and battles and contentions between the great Anglo-Irish lords, from which miseries as great, and often greater, arose. The De Burghos and Fitzgeralds and Birminghams and Butlers were now the owners of vast estates, knew no law except their own wills, and were never restrained by the Viceroy, whom they either despised or ignored. De Burgho and Fitzgerald quarrelled and fought (1264), so that the greater part of Ireland was destroyed between them; \*\* De Burgho seized all Fitzgerald's castles in Connaught and plundered his people, and the same year Fitzgerald quarrelled with the Viceroy and took him and Theobald Butler prisoners in the consecrated church of Castledermot, in Kildare.†† In the wars of Desmond de Burgho and De Clare were on opposite sides; Richard de Burgho and Fitzgerald were again at war (1294) Fitzgerald had his enemy taken and thrown into prison in consequence of which "all Ireland was thrown into a state of disturbance."‡‡—a statement easy to believe, as these two were

\* *Annals of Clonmacnoise*. His castle was at Castle Carbury, County Kildare.

† *Ibid*.

‡ The battle was fought near Croghan in King's County.

|| *Annals of Clonmacnoise*.

\*\* *Four Masters*.

†† Grace's *Annals*: Hanmer.

‡‡ *Four Masters*.

the most powerful men in Ireland. In right of his mother, the daughter and heiress of Hugh De Lacy, de Burgho was Earl of Ulster, and to his enormous possessions in Connaught he had added the estates of De Lacy; while Fitzgerald had estates in Connaught and could call most of Desmond his own, and, besides, was allied in marriage with De Clare and Geoffrey de Marisco. Nor did these two nobles desist from their quarrels except through the personal intervention of Edward I. Two years later, both De Burgho and Fitzgerald aided Edward in his war in Scotland, as they did at a later date (1303), his son and successor, Edward II.\* In their absence there was peace in Ireland, but a few years later (1311), De Burgho and De Clare were at war in which De Burgho was victorious, though himself was taken prisoner.† From all this it will be seen that the translator of the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* does not exaggerate, when he says "that there reigned more dissensions, strifes, wars and debates between the Englishmen themselves than between the Irishmen." The dissensions among the Irish were the cause of most of their miseries: the dissensions among the Anglo-Irish were the cause why the conquest of Ireland was indefinitely delayed, and the agony of the country indefinitely prolonged.

\* *Four Masters*, 1296-1303.

† *Annals of Clonmacnoise*. It was William de Burgho, or Burke, not the Red Earl (Richard de Burgho.)

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### *The Anglo-Normans and the Church.*

The Bull of Adrian—The Synod of Cashel—Its decrees—Laurence O'Toole—His character and death—His successors—Irish bishops usually English born—Henry de Londres—The Anglo-Irish lords destroy the churches of the Irish and build churches and monasteries in their place—The Canon Regulars of St. Augustine—The Cistercians, their popularity, power and degeneracy—Remonstrance of Donal O'Neill.

IF the Bull of Adrian be taken as an authentic document, and if its words truly represent the actual condition of Ireland at the time it was issued, then, assuredly, the Irish Church had fallen low. Henry was encouraged to proceed to Ireland, to extend the limits of the Church, to check the torrent of wickedness, to reform evil manners, to sow the seeds of virtue and to increase the Christian religion. The Pope's language assumes that the Christian religion had, at least from part of the country, disappeared, for otherwise it would not be necessary to speak of extending the limits of the Church; and a land where wickedness progressed unchecked with the strength and force of a mountain torrent, where the people's manners were evil, and where the seeds of virtue had perished, amid the surrounding wilderness of crime and sin, was a land in which religion had lost its power to influence the people's conduct for good. Such did Ireland and the Irish appear in the mind of the Pope, such was it represented to be by the agents of Henry II—a land without religion and without morals. To carry out his promise to the Pope, to establish religion where none existed, to pluck up the weeds of vice and have the Church in Ireland as a cultivated garden—this was what the King undertook to do, and he made a beginning by calling the Synod of Cashel.\* And the enactments made at that gathering give a more accurate view of the disorders that prevailed, than we can gather from the exaggerated words of Adrian IV.

\* Lanigan, Vol. iv., pp. 204–8. None of the northern bishops were present except perhaps the Bishop of Clogher.

With the concurrence of Henry's representatives, the Papal Legate, the Archbishops of Cashel, Dublin and Tuam and their suffragans and many other ecclesiastics—abbots, archdeacons, priors and deans, it was decreed, that marriages between cousins and kinsfolk should cease, that children should be catechised outside the church door and infants baptized at the consecrated fonts in the baptistries of the church, that tithes should be paid and that ecclesiastical possessions should be free from the exactions of secular men, that petty kings or other such should no longer quarter themselves and their retainers on ecclesiastical territories,\* that the clergy should no longer be liable for fines due as the result of a murder perpetrated by one of their kindred, that every good Christian should make his will at death, that those who died after a good confession should be buried with masses and vigils and that the divine offices should be celebrated in conformity with the practice in England.† The justice and equity of these decrees is apparent. Those who die a good death, in the eyes of the Church, have a right to the Church's prayers, those who made their wills before death were but providing against the litigation and ill-feeling that so often is the consequence of intestacy, and it was surely a grave injustice that a clergyman who had no connection and no sympathy with murder yet should be liable to a fine,‡ because the murderer happened to be of his blood, for the equitable connexion is that punishment should follow culpability and not innocence. Nor was it inequitable that Church possessions should be exempt from the exactions of rapacious laymen. These possessions were the offerings of piety, given to the Church and its ministers, so that they might be able to discharge their spiritual functions with all the decencies required, and the donors never intended that they should be harassed and impoverished by every turbulent chief, usually accompanied as he was by a crowd of hungry and dissolute retainers. The regulations as to catechising children in the church and as to baptisms regarded what was appropriate, rather than what was necessary: and all we can deduce from the other decrees is—that tithes in some instances were not paid, that the offices in the church differed in some respect from those in England, as in the time of Gillebert they differed in the Irish churches themselves, and that marriages were still contracted within the prohibited degrees of kindred. But for doctrinal errors, for

\* This was the practice of *Coshery*, whereby the chief and his retainers quartered themselves at the people's houses, eating and drinking at their expense. (Harris's *Ware*, Vol. II., p. 75.)

† *Cambrensis*, pp. 232-4.

‡ This was the money compensation called *Eric*, which almost in every case was the punishment for murder prescribed in the Brehon Law.

anything which could make the creed of the Irish church different from that of Rome, or of England, for peculiarities even of discipline in serious matters—for such as these we seek in vain in the Synod's decrees.\* Even the old worn out charge of Pelagianism is not revived, and the disputes about the tonsure and Easter belonged to the distant past. Malachy was dead, but it was evident that he had not laboured in vain, that the impress of his zeal remained, and that he had left successors who were earnest in continuing his work.

At the Synod of Cashel the Papal Legate was Christian, Bishop of Lismore, a man of piety and zeal, but the most remarkable figure among the bishops was Laurence O'Toole, Archbishop of Dublin. Born in Kildare and baptised at the shrine of St. Bridget,† his father was hereditary chief of the Hy Murray, a clan which, driven from Kildare‡ to the mountain district of Imaal in Wicklow, were for centuries yet to maintain their independence; his mother was of the race of the O'Byrnes, similarly driven from Kildare to Wicklow, and equally warlike as the O'Tooles. His father had been at war with MacMurrough, King of Leinster, and had been defeated by him, and the king, as a pledge of O'Toole's submission, insisted that young Laurence should be given him as a hostage. But the lad was treated with the greatest severity; the manner of his treatment became known to his father, who retaliated by making war on MacMurrough, defeated a detachment of his troops, and captured twelve of them. Negotiations followed, the captured soldiers were exchanged for Laurence, who, selecting the Church as his calling, was sent by his father to the School of Glendalough to be trained. It was the school of St. Kevin, founded by him centuries before and which still inherited his virtues as it hallowed his memory; and in that school young Laurence O'Toole spent thirteen years until, at the early age of twenty-five years, he was appointed abbot of Glendalough. His talents and piety attracted widespread notice, and, in 1162, he was called to the See of Dublin, being consecrated by Gelasius, Archbishop of Armagh. His zeal, his charity, his humility, his contempt for wealth, his capacity for administration, his popularity with all classes were as conspicuous at Dublin as at Glendalough. He introduced into Christ Church the rule of the Regular Canons

\* Lanigan, Vol. IV., p. 210. Lanigan notes that there is no mention made of Peter's pence, which was specially mentioned in Adrian's Bull.

† Healy's *Ancient Schools and Scholars*, pp. 433-446.

‡ They occupied the south-eastern portion of the present county of Kildare, and were driven from this fertile district shortly after St. Laurence's death (1280), by Walter (Baron) de Riddlesford, who had his castle at Tristledermot or Castledermot (*Book of Rights*, p. 210.)



of Aroasia, he adopted the same rule for himself and wore the dress of the Order under his episcopal robes, and such was his charity that sixty persons were daily fed from his bounty.\* His efforts to bring the Irish chiefs together in resistance to the invaders were those of a patriot, but he soon became convinced that success was impossible under the lead of such an imbecile as Roderick O'Connor, and after the Ardri was defeated near Dublin, the Archbishop quietly accepted the inevitable and acquiesced in the Anglo-Norman conquest of Dublin and of Leinster. But he refused to accept the invaders estimate of themselves, rapacity and cruelty and immorality he knew well to be their characteristics; he had no faith in Henry II. as a church reformer, and although he attended the Synod of Cashel and accepted the supremacy of the English king, he had no enthusiasm for the rule of the stranger, and in the interest both of the country and of the church he looked to the future with dread. So much did Henry fear his high character, his disinterestedness, his clear vision of the future, his independence of speech, that when Laurence was passing through England, on his way to the second Council of Lateran (1179), Henry compelled him to take an oath that he would say or do nothing at Rome, prejudicial to the King's interests in Ireland.† He feared that Laurence would speak the truth and, if so, the Pope could learn that Ireland was not so black as it was painted by Henry's agents, nor had Henry himself changed much from those days, when he persecuted à Beckett. The next year Laurence died. He had gone to Normandy with the son of Roderick O'Connor to be left as a hostage with Henry II. On his way he was taken ill and sought refuge at the monastery of Eu, and there he died, on the 14th November, bewailing the misfortunes that had come upon his country and sighing over the senseless divisions among her sons, from which he saw, as in a vision, so many misfortunes would arise.‡ A church which could boast of such a man, a saint in life, a saint at death, and canonised by the Church, but forty years after his death, was not altogether past redemption.

By the side of St. Laurence the Anglo-Norman clergy, who came to Ireland in the wake of Strongbow, stand in no favourable contrast. In their day the Normans of all lands were conspicuous for prowess in war. No weapon was more fatal than the Norman lance, no enemy more feared than the Norman knight. Bold,

\* D'Alton's *Archbishops of Dublin*, p. 54.

† It was on this occasion the Pope appointed Laurence, Papal Legate in place of Christian, who was old and feeble. (Lanigan, Vol. iv., p. 238; Healy, p. 443.)

‡ Even Giraldus calls him "a worthy and just man." (p. 292.)

daring, adventurous, brave even to rashness, independent in spirit, yet ready to submit to the harshest discipline, when imposed by their chosen chiefs, using their arms with unequalled dexterity, appalled neither by dangers nor numbers, they wandered far in search of conquest and renown ; and the extent of their dominions in Sicily and Italy and England attests the magnificence of their success. Little scrupulous as to means, they readily used treachery and deceit to attain their ends ; their march was often but organised plunder ; their castles but robbers' dens, whence they issued to despoil the surrounding inhabitants. But these harsher features of the Norman character were redeemed by some great virtues. The noble who had no learning himself aspired to be its patron and supporter ; religion seemed powerless to restrain him from violence and injustice, but he respected religion in others, loved to pose as the champion of the Church, spilt his blood freely in its defence, and generously gave to its ministers part, and often large part, of the lands which his good sword had won. On the field of Senlac, the conqueror built Battle Abbey for the monks of the Holy Trinity\* ; the Norman knight, Giroie, had six churches built on his estates † ; out of the plunder of the enemy the successful warrior built churches and liberally endowed them, and the most powerful nobles held themselves cheap if they had not on their domains some establishments of monks or clergy, provided by them with whatever was necessary for the service of God.‡

The superior culture of the clergy, apart from their religious character, gave them influence and authority and they were often called upon to fill the highest civil offices in the State. The virtuous and religious took Holy Orders, because they felt it was their vocation, and in the midst of the world they maintained their purity and innocence. But the ranks of the clergy were often recruited from a less desirable class, men of worldly ambition greedy of honours and riches, of the influence which learning conferred, of the position to which it might lead. Such men had little of the clerical spirit. They were statesmen, diplomatists, judges ; and sometimes the episcopal robes were exchanged for the sword and lance ; and the case of the Bishop of Coutances does not stand alone, who, at the head of his army, fell on the West Saxons (1069), and slew some of them, mutilated a number of the prisoners and put the rest to flight.¶ Such men held light the obligations of their calling. Looking to the court for prefer-

\* *Ordericus Vitalis. History of England and Normandy* (4 Vols: Bohn), Vol. II., p. 2.

† *Ordericus Vitalis*, Vol. I., p. 390.

‡ *Ibid.*, Vol. I., p. 382.

¶ *Ibid.*, Vol. II., p. 26.

ment they became abject flatterers and were repaid by their princes "by gifts of bishoprics and abbeys and other offices of power and dignity which ought to be conferred for the merits of holiness and learning."\* And there were other vices with which their characters were stained. The son of the Bishop of Bayeux was at the court of Henry I.,† a son of the Bishop of Salisbury was Chancellor of the kingdom (1139),‡ and at the Synod of Rouen (1119), a law had to be enacted prohibiting the secular clergy from having concubines, an abuse which was widespread and not at all of recent date.|| The Anglo-Norman clergy, who came to Ireland, were not unworthy to be associated with these, for St. Laurence O'Toole deprived 140 of them of power to officiate in his diocese because of their incontinence, and directed them to go to Rome for absolution.\*\* If such men were to reform the Irish Church, it was only just to ask that they should begin by reforming themselves.

After the death of Laurence O'Toole the see of Dublin was left vacant for nearly a year. The Chapter could not proceed to elect a successor without the King's *congé-d'élire*, and the King saw no special urgency for filling the vacant see. Its revenues were not so large as some of the English bishoprics, yet they were not inconsiderable, and they were appropriated by Henry as long as the see was vacant. But in September, 1181, the King's licence was issued to the Dublin Chapter, but he took good care to have his own nominee selected; the Chapter were summoned to meet at the Benedictine Abbey of Evesham, in Worcestershire, and under royal pressure which they were powerless to resist they selected a monk of that abbey, an Englishman, named John Comyn. Henry wanted no Irish Archbishop, no man whose sympathies would be with the natives, who, like Laurence, would resent their being treated with injustice, who would stand forth as their champion and boldly challenge their oppressors. The new Archbishop was after the King's own heart. He was not even a priest—only a deacon††—

\* *Ordericus Vitalis*, Vol. II., p. 52.

† *Ibid.*, Vol., II., p. 429

‡ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV., p. 210.

|| *Ibid.*, Vol. IV., pp. 29-30.

\*\* Lanigan, Vol. IV., pp. 241-2. They must have been all, or nearly all, Anglo-Normans, as this occurred in 1179, and neither at the Synod of Cashel or at any other Synod up to that date, was there any evidence that the Irish priests were incontinent; one of the decrees of Comyn's Synod—the 13th—shows the contrary (Vid D'Alton's *Archbishops of Dublin* p. 74).

†† Stokes' *Ireland and the Anglo-Norman Church*, pp. 206-9. He was ordained *priest*, March 13th, '82. Consecrated bishop, March 21st. Giraldus says he was made Cardinal, but this is a mistake. (Harris's *Ware*, Vol. I., pp. 314-15.)



he was Henry's supporter in the struggle with à Beckett, he had gone to Rome more than once to negotiate on the King's behalf, he held high civil employment, he had even gone circuit as judge. He was a courtier and a diplomatist, rather than an ecclesiastic desirous only of discharging his spiritual duties; and such little regard had he for his obligations that he continued to reside in England after his election had been ratified by the Pope; nor was it until the autumn of 1184, three years after his election, that he set foot in his diocese of Dublin. Nor did he, after coming to Ireland, remain there but, on the contrary, spent much of his time in England. He was there in 1186, two years later; he was in Normandy as an intermediary between Henry II. and his son, Richard; he was at the coronation of Richard (1189), and later on (1199), at the coronation of John; and while he was thus engaged and absent from his diocese, the episcopal duties were discharged at Dublin by some neighbouring bishop, perhaps by some native bishop, who had episcopal orders but no diocese. One Synod he held (1186) at which many salutary decrees were passed in relation to the celebration of Mass and the administration of the Sacraments and also prohibitions against simony and incontinence, and this is the only evidence we have that he troubled himself about the spiritual administration of his diocese.\* But if he neglected the spiritual duties he enlarged the temporal possessions of his see. He got large grants of lands, he was the recipient of many privileges from the kings, he had the see of Glendalough annexed to Dublin, and he also grasped the abbey of Glendalough and all its lands.† He was created a baron of Parliament, he had the powers of a lord palatine and set up Courts and had his sheriffs and seneschals and even his gallows for the execution of criminals‡; and he resented with vigour and energy any encroachment on his powers, either by the Mayor of Dublin or the King's Viceroy.||

Comyn's successors were of the same character as himself. Their names indicate their origin—De Londres, De Sandtford, De Derlington, De Hotham, De Ferrings, De Bicknor—there is nothing Irish in the sound of these names. Of the twenty-three Archbishops from St. Lawrence to the Reformation, not one was Irish.\*\* Previous to his appointment as Archbishop

\* Harris's *Ware*, Vol. I., pp. 316-17.

† Stokes, pp. 216-17.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 219-20.

|| His quarrels with Hamon de Valognes the Viceroy, were so serious that Comyn excommunicated his opponent, and at length the Pope, Innocent III., had to intervene: (Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 57.)

\*\* Stokes, p. 205;

of Dublin, De Londres was Archdeacon of Stafford,\* his successor was Dean of St. Martins le Grand, at London, De Sandford was Archdeacon of Middlesex,† and it was the same story with the rest of them—all were English. If, perchance, they were born in Ireland, they were none the less English—English in descent, in speech, in manners, in prejudices, not understanding the Irish, nor caring to understand them, having no sympathy with them, and regarding their language and manners as that of a rude people and an inferior race. Successive English Kings took care to have an Archbishop at Dublin who was in sympathy with their views, and even agents in carrying out their policy. And whenever possible it was the same elsewhere. In Armagh English power was of slower growth, English influence could not make itself so much felt, but the intrigues of English kings were incessant, their influence was great, nor were their efforts always unsuccessful; and if among the list of Primates we find the distinctively Irish names of O'Scanlan (1261–70), and MacMolissa (1272–1303), we find also the names of Taafe (1305–6), and De Jorse (1306–11), and FitzRalph (1347–60), which are as distinctively English.‡ Even in Tuam, which was so much farther removed from Dublin, English influence was felt, and when the archbishopric became vacant in 1235, the Dean and Chapter reported the vacancy to Henry III., and prayed for the issue of a *congé d'élire* and when granting it, Henry directs them to chose a man able to rule the church, *faithful to the King* and useful to the kingdom.|| Edward I. gave a licence to the Dean and Chapter of Achonry (1286), to elect a successor to Denis, late Bishop of Achonry,\*\* and similar licences were given about the same time for electing a bishop at Ardfert, an archbishop at Cashel, and a bishop at Killaloe, Elphin, Ross, and Clonmacnoise.†† As lord paramount of the Irish chieftains the King claimed the right to interfere in all these episcopal elections and for the same reason, when Henry II. was making his grants of lands to the Anglo-Norman lords, he specially reserved for himself and his successors the appointment of bishops, or at least the right to interfere when such appointments were being made.‡‡ His

\* D'Alton's *Archbishops of Dublin*, p. 79.

† *Ibid.*, p. 95.

‡ Ware's *Bishops (Archbishops of Armagh)*.

|| Stokes, p. 314.

\*\* *Calendar of State Papers* (1285–92), (Sweetman), pp. 107–8. The King's request was that the chapter should elect a *devout* man, fit to rule the Church and be faithful to the King. The piety of these Kings, as shown in the State Papers, is remarkable.

†† *Ibid.*, Preface.

‡‡ Mant, *History of the Church of Ireland*, Vol. I., p. 9.

expectation was that they would be of assistance in carrying out his policy.

In some cases, notwithstanding the manner in which they were appointed, these bishops displayed a sturdiness of spirit little to the taste of English kings. They protested against the practice of the King taking possession of the temporalities of a see, while the see was vacant. They protested against their tenants suing in the secular courts, at least without the Pope's consent. The Archbishop of Armagh and his suffragans entered into a compact to protect each other against encroachments from any lay power or jurisdiction.\* And when the Parliament of Kilkenny (1346), granted a subsidy to Edward III. for state purposes, the Archbishop of Cashel opposed its being levied within his province, and with his suffragan bishops decreed that any of their clergy who should contribute were *ipso facto* deprived of their benefices, and the laity who were their tenants and who subscribed should be *ipso facto* excommunicated. They even went beyond this and excommunicated all those who had granted the subsidy itself.† Such boldness was displayed chiefly, if not solely, by those of Irish birth, whose sympathies were Irish and who viewed with disfavor and distrust the arrogance of a foreign king. And so displeasing was their conduct that it was declared expedient by the King, that Irishmen should never be archbishops or bishops, because they always preach against the King and provide their churches with Irishmen to maintain their language.‡ With those of English birth or descent there was rarely any such trouble. It is not the dress that makes the monk: the courtier raised to the episcopate, remained a courtier still. His worldly spirit, his ambition, his servility to his royal master remained, and under the bishop's mitre and the episcopal robes, the time server and the place hunter could be discerned. And their pliancy was rewarded. They were trusted and favoured by successive English kings; they filled great civil offices; and more than one bishop filled the highest office in the land, the office of Viceroy.

What manner of men these were we can learn from the life and acts of Henry de Londres. Where he was born, or when, or where he was educated, we do not know. But he was certainly English, his abilities were of a high order; he was educated for the Church, and took at least some Orders,

\* Mant, *History of the Church of Ireland*, Vol. I., pp. 15-16:

† Mant, p. 18. The names of these bishops, Mac Molissa in Armagh, and Kelly in Cashel indicate their nationality (Ware's *Bishops*.)

‡ Sweetman's *Calendar*, pp: 9-10:



so as to be qualified for Church preferment. Like many others so educated he was but little employed in ecclesiastical offices ; his abilities attracted the notice of King John, who had little talent himself but appreciated it in others and was ready to make use of it ; and De Londres from time to time was called to fill many civil offices by his sovereign. He went through Berkshire, as judge of Assize (1199),\* and some years later was one of the judges of the King's Bench at Westminster. He was ambassador to the King of Navarre (1201), and later on to Otho of Germany and his nobles ; and he was sent to Ireland (1204), to negotiate on the King's part with Cahal Crovderg O'Connor. In the dispute between the King and the Pope he acted as the King's envoy and did his best to reconcile them. John had much patronage in his hands, and it was by this means he rewarded De Londres. He gave him a church living in London (1202), two years later, he got another at Norwich, and yet another at Coventry, and these were added to, in the next year, by the addition of two more church livings. Nor was he yet satisfied, for in 1207, he got a prebend at Exeter and another at Leicester, and in the next year he was made Archdeacon of Stafford and also Dean of Shrewsbury, and finally, on the death of John Comyn (1212), he became Archbishop of Dublin. Even in Dublin he kept all his church livings in England and even got an addition—the Deanery of Penkridge, in Staffordshire—the ecclesiastical duties attached to these offices being performed by deputy. The revenues of the See of Dublin had been greatly augmented by Comyn, and besides there were the revenues of the See and Abbey of Glendalough, yet such was the rapacious avarice of De Londres that he wished for more, and resorted to at least one dishonest trick for which history has justly affixed a stigma on his memory. He summoned all his ecclesiastical tenants in Dublin before him, directing them to bring all papers, leases, titles, and such like with them, which demonstrated the nature of their rights to the lands they held, and when he had got possession of all such papers, in the very presence of these outraged and disgusted tenants, he threw the documents into the fire.† His evident object was to have these tenants at his mercy, so that he could impose on them what terms he pleased. For this act he was nicknamed “scorch-villein,” and earned the just execration of all. That such a man should claim exemption from taxes and that through his bailiffs he should even seize wines, cloths and victuals belonging to the citizens and not pay for them‡ will excite no

\* Stokes, p. 254: Ware's *Bishops*:

† Ware's *Bishops*.

‡ Gilbert's *Historic and Municipal Documents*, p. 74

surprise for the passion of avarice carries men far. But for a courtier and a favourite, who had so long studied the caprices of kings, we are a little surprised that he should encroach on the royal prerogatives, in having lay cases tried in the ecclesiastical courts, in having a pillory erected on the public highway, and having gone so far in this direction, that Henry III. declared his proceedings were strange and even incredible.\* From 1213 to 1215, and again from 1219 to 1224, he was Viceroy of Ireland. A man who filled so many offices and was much concerned with civil affairs had but little time for purely spiritual duties, yet he sometimes remembered he was a bishop. He attended the council of Lateran (1215), and he held a Synod at Dublin (1217), at which stringent regulations were made as to the celibacy of the clergy, their attendance at Synods, the visitation of the sick, and the ceremonies to be employed by priests when so engaged.† Like Antiochus, perhaps, in his old age, he remembered the evils he had done, rightly thinking that while he could not altogether neglect temporal concerns, yet, that in attending to his spiritual duties he was more profitably employed.

While the Anglo-Norman lords were precluded from interfering in episcopal elections, still their influence on the destinies of the Church was great. Like their countrymen in England and Normandy, each of these adventurers was ambitious to build churches and found monasteries, and they began by destroying the churches already in existence. After the synod in Dublin at which Vivian presided (1177), it may be assumed that the practice of storing provisions in the churches became less common, but with the obstinacy which was one of their peculiarities the people sometimes did so, hoping that the churches would be respected. But the Anglo-Normans were bent on plunder as well as conquest, and were not willing that even the churches should be spared. They were counselled to pay a fair price for whatever they took—the wolf was allowed into the sheepfold, but was told to treat the sheep with tenderness, and the counsel was hearkened to as might be expected. De Courcy plundered the churches of Ulster on his march and took the Bishop of Down prisoner (1177),‡ FitzAdelm de Burgho burned Armagh (1179), including all the houses of the Canons Regular and all the churches, except the house of the Canons Regular of St. Bridget, and the church of the relics.|| His

\* Gilbert's *Historic and Municipal Documents*, pp. 75–78.

† D'Alton's *Archbishops of Dublin*, p. 85. Stokes, p. 267, note.

‡ Lanigan, Vol. IV., p. 232–3.

|| Stuart's *Historical Memoirs of Armagh* (ed., Coleman), p. 85.

descendant William de Burgho imitated his violence in Connaught (in 1202), preyed and spoiled the Abbey of Knockmoy of all things whatsoever, both great and small, and then marched through Connaught plundering all the churches on his march.\* And Philip of Worcester wasted Armagh (1184), for six days in succession, exacted heavy fines from the clergy, and to such an extent was everything portable or of any value interfered with, that even a large cauldron,† or brewing pan was carried away. Lest the provisions which the churches contained should fall into the hands of their enemies, the Irish destroyed the churches themselves, and thus attacked both by native and foreigner, of all buildings the churches fared worst, and, roofless, empty and desolate, they marked the track of the invader. It is seldom and with reluctance that Giraldus has anything harsh to say of his own countrymen, but he has to confess that they not only neglected to make any offering to the Church of Christ, not only are the honours and thanks due to God unacknowledged by any gift of the prince and his followers, but the Church was robbed of its land and possessions, and its ancient rights and privileges were annulled.‡ The poor clergy are reduced to beggary. The Cathedral Churches which were richly endowed with broad lands by the piety of the faithful in old times now echo with lamentations for that of which they have been robbed by these men and others, who came over with them, or after them, so that to uphold the Church is turned into spoiling and robbing it.|| Over large tracts of the country all that remained of these churches, founded by the piety of past ages, were some blackened and sightless ruins.

After sin comes repentance, and after these deeds of violence and sacrilege, the Anglo-Normans began to consider that it was time to repair the ravages they had done. They set about the task in characteristic Norman fashion. The Irish they heartily despised—their soldiers, their arms, their tactics, or rather want of tactics, in war, their language and manners the style of their buildings, even their saints did not escape criticism, and Giraldus declares that these Irish saints were of a vindictive temper.\*\* St. Patrick indeed they revered, and not even the most enthusiastic, or the most credulous, among the Irish have multiplied his miracles to such an extent as Jocelin,

\* *Annals of Clonmacnoise.*

† Stuart's *Armagh*, p. 87. Tirell, who took away the cauldron, was struck with horror and restored it, "but afterwards perished in a miserable manner."

‡ *Cambrensis*, p. 318. The prince in question is John:

|| *Ibid.*, p. 176.

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. III:



the monk of Furness :\* and his master, De Courcy, whatever he may have thought of St. Columba, made good use of his name in his invasion of Ulster, and appealed to the reverence and fears of the natives, as the knight foretold in the Saint's prophecy. But of that large number of pious men, who were revered by the people as saints, and whose lives had made sacred so many hills and glens and wells and streams—all such as these the Anglo-Normans either ignored or despised. Out of the stones of the ruined churches they would build new churches and monasteries, but it would be under the patronage of their own Norman Saints, it was their names the churches would bear, it was Norman Orders of monks that would inhabit the monasteries, and the buildings themselves would be modelled on the well-known principles of Norman architecture.† When De Courcy took possession of Down, he drove the secular Canons from the place and established in their stead a Benedictine monastery with monks from St. Werburgs in Chester. The Benedictine abbey of Corrig he filled with monks from Furness in Lancashire, and the priory of Neddram, in the same county he made subject to St. Bega's abbey, in Cumberland.‡ De Lacy established a monastery at Duleek of the Canons Regular of St. Augustine but made them subject to that of Llanthony, in Monmouthshire ; and when Geoffrey FitzRobert established a house of the same Order at Kells in Kilkenny, he brought the monks from Bodmin in Cornwall.¶ During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, these Anglo-Normans founded in Ireland seven monasteries filled with the Regular Canons of St. Victor, seven more filled with the Premonstre Canons ; and of the Cruciferii, or Crutched Friars, an Order evolved out of the Regular Canons of St. Augustine but of a stricter discipline, there were thirteen houses founded. Of the Benedictine Order there were founded thirteen monasteries and convents, and of the military order of St. John of Jerusalem there were seventeen houses.\*\* These orders were all of foreign origin ; they were unfamiliar to the Irish, and they were in every case filled with English, or at least ruled by those of English sympathies and English extraction.

At the Anglo-Norman invasion, there were nearly 200 monasteries and convents in Ireland living under the rule of

\* He wrote the *Life and Acts of St. Patrick* in Latin ; it has been translated into English by Swift (1809).

† The same might be said of *England*, where Norman influence was predominant and nowhere more so than in the Church.

‡ Lanigan, IV., pp. 253-4.

¶ *Ibid.*, p. 321.

\*\* Harris's *Ware*, Vol. II., pp. 270-3:

St. Augustine. To say that they were all Augustinian monks and nuns would be indefinite and misleading, for St. Augustine drew up no Rule, in the same sense that St. Benedict did, but he recommended some women under his direction to live in community and to renounce private property, and in time the idea was borrowed and put in practice by priests. They were originally Canons of Cathedrals, who lived in community, but did not renounce private property, nor constantly follow any rule. For such there were many decrees of Popes and Councils directing them to live under a rule and to renounce private property, which many, but not all, did. Those who did were called Regular Canons of St. Augustine. The vast majority of the monasteries in Ireland, founded by the old Irish saints as far back as the sixth century, gradually adopted this rule, and before the twelfth century these inmates were known as Canons Regular of St. Augustine. They were not secular priests, as they lived in community and had no private property, yet they were charged with the duties of the mission, and so far were approximated to the secular priests. As they were already popular in England, they were countenanced and patronised and in many cases richly endowed by the Anglo-Normans; and no fewer than nine priors of these monasteries had seats in the Irish Parliament.\*

But of all the Irish monasteries there was no Order so favoured by the foreigners and none which acquired such influence and power as the Cistercians. An offshoot of the Benedictine Order, the Cistercian was founded in the eleventh century by those of the Benedictines who saw with regret its former strictness and fervour degenerate into laxness, and who wished to be members of an Order with a stricter discipline. The new Order, with its headquarters at Cîteaux, rapidly increased, but at no time was its fame greater than when it numbered St. Bernard among its members. He joined the Order at Cîteaux (1113), and such was the ardor with which he mortified himself, such the rapidity with which he increased in virtue, such the administrative ability he showed, that though only 25 years old, and but two years in the Community, he was permitted by his superiors to leave Cîteaux with twelve companions and established a new house of the Order at Clairvaux. He loved to commune with nature, with the trees and rocks and hills, believing that they could teach him more than any masters could:† and

\* *Catholic Dictionary*. These nine were the priors of Christ Church and All Hallows (Dublin) of Connell, Kells, Louth, Athassel, Killagh, Newtown and Raphoe.

† *St. Bernard's Works*. Translated by Eales, Vol. I., p. 353 (Letter to Henry Murdoch)

in his new home his love was gratified. Situated in the diocese of Langres, between two mountains and in a valley, wild, gloomy and thickwooded, the monks had to undergo many hardships. They dug and ploughed, they pulled up the useless shrubs, and planted in their stead the oak, the lime tree, the ash and the beech. The stream which ran through the valley they divided into channels, to irrigate their garden, to supply the necessities of their various workshops, to turn their mill-wheel. The monks built their own cells, as they did the abbey itself; they fished in the stream; they ground their corn; they baked their bread; they brewed their own beer; they cultivated their orchard and their garden; and under their skilful and patient toil the trees grew fast and bore fruit in abundance, and one side of the mountain, hitherto barren, became fertile with vineyards and the other fertile with corn.\* When St. Malachy of Armagh visited the place, more than twenty years after its foundation, his pious soul was charmed with everything he saw—the quietness and peace of the valley, the serenity of the monks, their life of austerity and labour and prayer, their contentment with the coarse food they ate and the coarse garments they wore, their thankfulness to God for what they possessed, for the water that rushed through the valley, for the shade afforded by the trees, for the colours and scent of the flowers that bloomed. His wish was to remain there himself, but as this could not be done he sent two monks from Ireland to be trained under St. Bernard, and after an interval, they, with others from Clairvaux, returned to Ireland and founded (1141), the first Cistercian monastery at Mellifont.† In sending them St. Bernard said he was sending a little seed,‡ and the seed quickly developed and produced fruit. The Benedictines loved to build their monasteries on the tops of the mountains; the Cistercians by contrast loved the valleys, and Mellifont, like Clairvaux, was built in a valley, its situation being on the river Mattock, some three or four miles west of Drogheda, just bordering on the county of Meath, being itself in Louth. To the Irish, who had seen their own monasteries decay, and the spirit of self-sacrifice grow feeble among their monks, the new Order was hailed with welcome. Their poverty, their labour, their abstemious diet, their coarse white garment—emblem of their purity—their deep spirit of prayer, their entire detachment from the world, their devotion to the Mother of God—always so popular in Ireland—attracted the admiration and esteem of all. The

\* *St. Bernard's Works*, Vol. II., pp. 460-7.

† Mellifont is described and its history given in a little book of 45 pages "*Mellifont Abbey; its rise and downfall*," by an unknown author.

‡ *St. Bernard's Works*, Vol. II., p. 897. (Letter to St. Malachy).



native chiefs became eager to found and endow one of these monasteries on their own territories ; the Anglo-Norman lords were equally zealous ; and in little more than half a century 40 Cistercian monasteries were spread throughout the land.\*

Wealth and worldly power will always corrupt the morals and weaken the fervour of religious communities, and these baneful influences were soon at work within the walls of the Cistercian monasteries. The generous donation of lands soon placed them beyond the necessity of labouring for their support ; they no longer dug and ploughed as of old, but employed labourers instead, and the priors of their monasteries, raised to the dignity of spiritual peers, became statesmen and politicians. St. Bernard saw with disfavour, and even with horror, an abbot going forth with a retinue of 60 horsemen ; † he could not understand how the same person could be clothed in armour and march at the head of armed soldiers and then, having laid aside his armour and vested in alb and stole, read the Gospel in the midst of the church, at one time give the signal for battle with the trumpet, and at another convey the orders of the bishop to the people ; and he thought it was no part of clerical duty to bear arms at the pay of the King, nor any part of the royal duties to administer lay affairs by means of clerics. ‡ Yet, a century after his death, these things were seen and noted among the abbots of his own and of other monasteries in Ireland. To the penal enactments against the Irish and the proscription attached to their language and dress and manners, the abbots of Mellifont and their brethren of Baltinglass and Dunbrody and Jerpoint and Bective were consenting parties. || The Prior of the Augustinian monastery at Conal held high military command, and was as ready and as quick to slaughter the Irish as Strongbow or Raymond le Gros ; and the warlike proclivities of this prior were not unusual. English King and Irish Viceroy displayed the keenest anxiety to have these Abbots and Priors English, at least in sympathy, if not by birth ; the abbot in turn looked askance at native monks in their monasteries and often denied admittance to native born. A statute was passed at Kilkenny (1310), prohibiting religious houses in the English parts of Ireland from admitting as a member of their community anyone except of English blood. A few years later (1322), it was again ordered that no one should be admitted into the Abbey of Mellifont, unless he could swear that he was of English descent.

\* Harris's *Ware*, Vol. II., pp. 274-6.

† *Works*, Vol. I., p. 278, note. (Letter to the Abbot of St. Denis).

‡ *Ibid.* Vol. I., pp. 285-6.

|| They were members of the Parliaments which enacted such laws.

The Kilkenny Statute was repealed by Edward II., and at a general chapter of the Cistercian Order the decree regarding Mellifont was described as damnable, and abbots were warned to admit worthy members, no matter what their nation.\* In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries it was necessary to call in the aid of the mendicant Orders—the Dominicans and Franciscans, and Carmelites—for in too many cases the Cistercian and Augustine Canons appeared to have neither the leisure nor the inclination to confine themselves to spiritual concerns.

In his letter, or Remonstrance to the Pope (1315), Donal O'Neill had much complaint to make against these Anglo-Irish ecclesiastics—bishops, abbots and monks. He complains of the statute just referred to which was passed at Kilkenny, and reminds the Pope that "the monasteries for monks and Canons from which in modern times the Irish are thus repulsed were founded for the most part by themselves."† Not merely the lay or secular English, but even their religious, asserted the doctrine that it was no more sin to kill an Irishman than a dog, or any other animal. And some of these monks affirm if it were to happen to them, as it often does, that they should kill an Irishman, they would not for this refrain from the celebration of Mass for a single day. And he instances the case of monks of the Cistercian Order at Granard and Inch, who publicly appeared in arms and slaughtered the Irish, and yet celebrated their Masses notwithstanding. A century and a half after the Invasion, the Irish Church might be described as in an unhealthy condition, and not even the strongest partisans of the Anglo-Normans could declare that the cause of religion or morality had advanced. The weeds which Henry II. was to destroy still remained, and in the meantime even a more plentiful crop had grown.

\* Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*, p. 100. Stuart's *Armagh*, pp. 115-16; (Coleman's *Supplementary Notes*). It seems quite evident that the Irish and English monks did not agree: and it is only fair to remark that if the English excluded the Irish, the Irish in turn excluded the English from their own monasteries. (*Letter of Edward II. to the Pope*). Stuart, p. 116.

... † King's *Church History of Ireland*, Vol. III., pp. 1119-35:



## CHAPTER XX.

### *The Invasion of Bruce.*

Friendly relations between the Irish and Scotch—Robert Bruce in Ulster—The Old Irish—No hope of unity among the native chiefs—Miserable condition of the people—Donal O'Neill appeals to the Pope—Edward Bruce invited to Ireland—Arrives in Ulster—Joined by O'Neill—Overruns the north-east of Ulster—The Anglo-Irish lords meet at Kilkenny—Richard de Burgho marches into Ulster—Bruce and Felim O'Connor—Bruce defeats De Burgho at Connor—Roger Mortimer near Kells—And Butler near Athy—Some minor defeats of the Irish—Battle of Athenry—Bruce captures Carrickfergus—Arrival of King Robert of Scotland—The Bruces before Dublin—March to Limerick but retreat—Robert Bruce returns to Scotland—Battle of Faughart.

IN the early part of the fourteenth century the relations between the native Irish and the Scots were those of sympathy and friendship, nor was this friendship recent, either in origin or growth. The Dalriadan Scots, who left Ireland in the early part of the sixth century, soon obtained a firm foothold in Scotland and when their independence was recognised at the Convention of Drumcat, they increased in influence and power until, about the middle of the ninth century, Kenneth MacAlpine, having conquered the Picts,\* the seat of government was transferred to Dunkeld, thence to Abernethy, and finally to Scone. The two races—the Scots and Picts—coalesced and united under a single chief, and Scotland was able to fight long and successfully against her powerful antagonist in the South. Similar in manners and habits, speaking languages one of which was but a dialect of the other, drawn together by the recollection of their common origin, both Irish and Scotch, as the ages passed, regarded each other as relatives and friends, and in the wars between England and Scotland, the sympathy of Ireland was always on the Scottish side. This sympathy grew in intensity after the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland. Both nations were then fighting the same

\* In the year 838, according to Robertson: (*History of Scotland*):



enemy, battling against the same threatened subjugation, suffering the same manner of ills from the same hands. The attractive power of common suffering and common sorrow is strong ; and the Irish followed with interest the heroic struggle of their kindred across the water, and heard with unbounded delight that under an able Scottish leader, opposed by an incapable English one, victory had declared at Bannockburn for the Scots, and the standard of the English had gone down.

But it was in Ulster especially that the triumph of Bruce was heard of with the greatest exultation. It was from Ulster the Scots had gone in the sixth century to Caledonia.\* The distance across from Antrim to Cantire was small, the intercourse between the two countries was frequent ; there is reason to believe that some of the Ulster Irish aided Bruce in his wars ; and when Robert Bruce met with temporary defeat, he was sheltered in Ulster, and for a time lived at Rathlin Island, off the coast of Antrim.† The Ulster chiefs, with Donal O'Neill at their head, asked themselves could not Ireland follow where Scotland led, could not she also assert her freedom, and in doing so could she not appeal for aid, and with confidence, to Bruce, who had already struck off the fetters from Scotland's limbs. If the Irish chiefs could even then suspend their quarrels and cordially unite for the purpose of destroying English power in Ireland, they might perhaps succeed, but it was useless to expect such unity. Three centuries had passed since Clontarf, but never once, during that period, had *all* the Irish princes united for any common object, and they were still as disunited as ever. In every province some of the best of the lands had already passed under English sway. The old Irish in the conquered districts were reduced to a state worse even than that of slaves ; their property gone, their lives and liberty insecure. The natives who dwelt near the English settlers were for ever harassed by military expeditions, not knowing the day nor the hour when their lands would be seized, their houses destroyed, their lives sacrificed. The territories over which the native chiefs ruled were gradually shrinking in extent, much of their possessions had already become the prey of rapacious English lords, who were yet unsatisfied and coveted what remained in Irish hands. The only hope of the Irish lay in combination, yet, with an infatuation without parallel, they would not combine. Each chief was mindful only of his own clan and of preserving what remained of his diminished power ; he still regarded a neighbouring chief with envy, regretted his success, and willingly

\* From Dalriada in Antrim.

† Gilbert's *Viceroy's*, p. 133.

obtained English aid for his overthrow. To explain the interminable dissensions among the Irish chiefs, it is not sufficient to say that these dissensions were bred by the clan system under which these chiefs lived. Political systems are created by the people ; the people are not necessarily wedded to any one system for ever ; these institutions ought to be changed and mended to suit the changing of the times ; and a people less quick-witted than the Irish could not but know, whatever the clan system was in the early ages of their nation, that in the fourteenth century it was as much out of place in Ireland, as the government of the Patriarchs would be in the highly civilised states of modern Europe. Nor was it the common people, nor even the lesser chiefs, who set their faces against change. They respected, as the Irish always do, what was ancient and venerable, but they must have ceased to respect a system which kept them for ever at war and under which peace and security were unknown, and if they did not desire a change so many of them would not have petitioned from time to time to be placed under English law. The initiative was left to the greater chiefs, and they showed no anxiety for a change. Each of these chiefs was willing to be supreme but he would be content with no secondary position. Their pride and vanity forbade it. Blind to the future, they refused to learn from the past, sacrificed without shame or scruple the lives of their clansmen, and transmitted to their descendants the inheritance of discord which they had received.

Hopeless of bettering their condition through the unity of the native chiefs, the Irish sometimes appealed to the English king for the protection of English law, but they usually appealed in vain. Henry III., when appealed to by those who lived in the midst of the English settlers and who had neither the protection of Irish nor of English law, commanded his Viceroy to see that they were governed by the laws of England, but the Anglo-Irish lords frustrated this design. They knew that if the Irish were under English law, they would have a subject's redress against injustice and could not be robbed nor murdered with impunity. There is a feeble letter from Henry III. to these lords (1246), praying them to *permit* the enforcement of English law\*—so powerful were these lords, so little subject to any authority, that they were thus supplicated by an English King. A similar letter was addressed to the Viceroy, Ufford (1280),† but the Anglo-Irish lords again defeated its purpose ; and the Irish who lived within the shadow of English power were still left without

\* Leland's *History of Ireland*, Vol. I., pp. 224-7.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 244-5. But the Irish would have to pay for getting the English law extended to them. They had offered 8000 marks for the privilege. (*The O'Conors of Connaught*, pp. 118-119.)

the protection of English law. Nor does it appear that the English king was always anxious to protect the Irish from injustice, or to establish peace among them. In the reign of Edward I. there were contentions between the MacDermotts and O'Connors of Connaught, and Ufford, the Viceroy, was summoned to England by the King to answer why these disturbances were not repressed (1278), and the answer given was that in policy he thought it expedient to wink at one knave cutting off another, that would save the King's coffers, and purchase peace to the land whereat the King smiled and bade him return to Ireland.\*

With native chiefs warlike, restless and turbulent, seldom at peace and seldom allowing those within the range of their influence to be at peace, with an alien aristocracy grasping, greedy and insatiable, with English kings not always friendly, but always careless or impotent to protect them, the lot of the native Irish was pitiable. The peasant who tilled his fields knew not how soon his crops would be wasted and destroyed, nor how soon the cattle which he tended with care would become the prey of some rapacious freebooter; and if he lay down peacefully to rest, he might be awakened by the light of his blazing home. His property and his life were at the mercy of every English plunderer, and against the evil doer there was no redress, for the Englishman could not be made amenable to Irish or Brehon law, nor had the Irishman the right to appeal to an English judge. Men will not bear silently and without protest the infliction of wrong. When a government will not restrain the wrong-doer, nor protect the peaceful from injustice, the most timid and hesitating will have recourse to violence; and if the native Irish of the period suffered at the hands of the English settlers, they sometimes retaliated, and inflicted on their persecutors some of the injuries they had received. Along the coast and inland, in the province of Leinster, were a few towns tenanted principally by English, where trade flourished and where the merchant and the artisan pursued their avocations in peace, within the shelter of the town walls, while outside, violence and disorder raged. But these towns which had not a surrounding wall were as defenceless as the open country, and an event which occurred at New Ross (1260), is specially mentioned, where a horseman entered the streets, bargained with a merchant for a piece of cloth and then, seizing the cloth, rode away without paying, an event which caused all the citizens, even the women, to join in building a wall round their town.†

In the Remonstrance of Donal O'Neill to Pope John XXII.

\* Hardiman's *Statute of Kilkenny*—Introduction, p. 24.

† D'Arcy Magee's *Art MacMurrough*, p. 129. Appendix.



there is a detailed account given of the state of Ireland and the ills under which the Irish groaned. They had been already driven from the most fertile of their lands, from the plains to the bogs and mountains, and even here they were insecure—their property was taken, their lives sacrificed with impunity, for if an Irishman committed a crime he was dragged before an English tribunal, where he was fined or imprisoned, or perhaps put to death, but an Englishman, who committed the same crime against an Irishman, was allowed to go free. The English had repeatedly declared that it was no crime to kill an Irishman ; and the calculation is made that by the sword alone, since the Invasion, at least 50,000 of both nations had been killed.\* Treaties with the Irish these English settlers readily made, and broke with equal readiness, and special mention is made of the treachery of De Clare, who broke faith with O'Brien and had him cruelly tortured to death (1278), and of Birmingham, "the treacherous baron," who slaughtered O'Connor of Offaly and his chiefs, while they were guests at his table, nor do these cases stand alone. Bishops and priests were treated with every indignity and were so cowed that they were afraid even to complain,† and monks of Irish birth were excluded from those establishments which their own countrymen had built and endowed. So anxious were the Irish for peace and security, that they had—at least several of them had—appealed to the English king through Lord John Hotham, offering to hold their lands by English tenure, but their appeal had not met with the courtesy of a reply.‡ Donal O'Neill reminded the Pope that one of his predecessors, Adrian IV., by false representations and by his partiality for England, had granted Henry II. dominion over Ireland, but that he had done so for the good of Ireland itself and in the hope that it would prosper under English rule. He now instanced the evils his country had suffered and was suffering still, his countrymen and himself had no hope of getting justice from England, and had, in consequence, invited Edward Bruce, brother of King Robert of Scotland, to come and reign over them and they hoped he would receive the Pope's blessing and support. John XXII. did not grant the prayer of the Remonstrance ; he had no love for the Bruces ; King Robert was already excommunicated, and far from approving of Edward Bruce's

\* King's *Church History*, Vol. III., p. 1123.

† King, p. 1124 ; "they were strangely influenced by a slavish timidity."

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 1132. They offered even that the English king should divide the land between them and the Anglo-Irish, whom they call the middle nation, "so widely different in their principles of morality from the English of England and from all other nations, that they may be denominated—not of any middling but the most extreme degree of perfidy."

invasion, he even warned the Irish against supporting him and threatened with excommunication those who did.\* Yet the Remonstrance impressed him strongly, and though he did not answer Donal O'Neill directly, he wrote to the English king, warning him and advising him that the Irish should be treated with greater justice.†

In the meantime, Edward Bruce had received the invitation to come to Ireland. His brother, Robert, did everything to aid him, nor was he displeased thus to get rid of an aspiring and ambitious brother, who had already shown himself disagreeably active, acquiesced with reluctance in the position of a mere subject and had put forth a claim to share the dominion of Scotland with his brother.‡ All preparations being made, Edward Bruce sailed, and in May, 1315, landed at Larne, in the county of Antrim. He had with him 6000 men, well armed in the English fashion, experienced in war, inspired with the memory of recent victory, and he had leaders already tried and proved, such as the Earl of Moray, Menteith, John Campbell, Bissett and others.¶ He was cordially welcomed by Donal O'Neill, who, in the hope of seeing an united Ireland, sacrificed his own hereditary rights, as the descendant of Nial, and swore allegiance to Edward Bruce; the other leaders, Irish and Scotch, followed his example and, amid the acclamations of the whole army, Bruce was proclaimed King of Ireland. In the north-east of Ireland the ancient inhabitants had been driven from the lands on which their ancestors had lived and beheld with envious eyes these same lands in the hands of the English settlers, the descendants of the adventurers who had come to Ulster with De Courcy, or had been subsequently planted there by De Lacy, or De Burgho. Against these was directed the first fury of Bruce's attack. Their lands were wasted, their crops destroyed, their castles and even their churches levelled to the earth. The Mandevilles, the Savages, the Bissetts, the Russells and the rest combined, but their united forces were quickly overthrown. They retired to Carrickfergus but the place was attacked and taken, a remnant shut themselves up in the strong fortress of the town and maintained their position against repeated attacks, and this garrison alone remained to the English Colonists, while the town and country

\* Leland, Vol. I., p. 275. In his communication to Robert Bruce (1316), the Pope styled him noble lord and refused him the title of King, and when he heard of the expedition to Ireland, he excommunicated him. (Lingard, Vol. III., pp. 19-20.)

† King's History, pp. 1136-39.

‡ The O'Conors of Connaught, p. 131.

¶ Grace's and Clyn's Annals; also Four Masters. Loch Ce and Annals of Clonmacnoise.

round had fallen into the invaders' hands.\* In a rapid march Bruce proceeded southwards, destroying the property of the settlers as he passed, and by the end of June he had captured Dundalk and Ardee, the church of the latter town in which some had taken refuge he set on fire and burned both the church and the people within its walls.†

From the English king the new Irish king had little to fear. Edward II. had fled, defeated and disgraced, from the field of Bannockburn; ‡ such a king was unlikely to defend his Irish possessions with ability or vigour, and if the Anglo-Irish lords could not resist the invader, then English power in Ireland was doomed. But these Anglo-Irish lords were powerful and wealthy, and the lands which their own swords, or the swords of their ancestors had won they were not likely to relinquish without a struggle. They had often fought among themselves, but the present was a time to suspend their quarrels, in unity alone was strength and salvation; and for the purpose of concerting measures of defence they met in Council at Kilkenny. || The Viceroy, Butler, was there, so also were Fitzgerald of Offaly and Birmingham and De la Poer of Waterford and many others. The most powerful of all the Anglo-Irish was absent—Richard de Burgho, the Red Earl, as he was called. But he was not indifferent to the events that were taking place. As Earl of Ulster his possessions in the northern province were enormous, the district devastated by Bruce was either his or his vassals, and from his castle at Galway he contemplated with rage his castles and lands in Ulster destroyed and pillaged and the homes of his vassals laid waste. His power was so great that he could scarcely be called a subject, and in public documents his name was placed before that of the Viceroy. And his power was not greater than his pride. He despised the other Anglo-Irish, disdained to take counsel with them and deemed himself alone able to cope with and to conquer this presumptuous Scotchman, who had dared to invade his territory. His retainers throughout Connaught obeyed his summons and a strong army was soon assembled at Athlone. With the O'Connors, discord had done its work. They were little better than the vassals and dependents of De Burgho; they dared not disobey his mandate; and the ruling prince—Felim O'Connor—with his forces had also gone to Athlone.

The whole army thus composed marched eastwards through

\* *Annals of Clonmacnoise*. Dowling's *Annals* at 1314. If Bruce was opposed by the Bissetts, there was also a Bissett in his own ranks.

† *Grace's Annals*.

‡ He did not draw rein till he reached Dunbar. (Lingard, Vol. III: p. 12.)

|| *Clynn's Annals*; the date was the beginning of June, 1315.



Westmeath and Meath, nor was their progress less destructive in these districts than that of Bruce in Ulster. Some little distance south of Ardee De Burgho met the Viceroy, Butler, proceeding north to encounter Bruce, but the Red Earl bade him go back, haughtily told him that he and his vassals would overcome the Scots and that Bruce's head should soon fall.\* Butler returned south, and De Burgho and his army came up with Bruce near Ardee. The forces of the Red Earl were strong, probably superior in numbers to the Scottish and northern Irish, and, under the advice of Donal O'Neill, Bruce fell back and took up a position on the river Bann, whither he was followed by De Burgho. The two armies were on the opposite banks of the river, De Burgho's on the east bank, Bruce's on the west; the opposing soldiers discharged arrows at each other across the river,† and in this irregular and desultory fashion the campaign was prolonged, De Burgho anxious to engage in a general battle, which Bruce was equally anxious to postpone. He had hopes of disengaging Felim O'Connor from his alliance with De Burgho, was secretly negotiating with him, and at length succeeded in his object. He assured Felim that Connaught would be restored to him in full, freed from the hated English, and represented to him that in fighting with De Burgho he was fighting against his own and his country's best interests. Another reason, also, weighed with Felim, for a rival prince—Rory O'Connor—had already denounced him as the ally of the English, had met with much support from the native chiefs and had even intrigued with Bruce, who told him to wage war against the English in Connaught, or elsewhere, but to leave Felim unmolested.‡ With apparent, though insincere regret, Felim announced to his ally that he should return west; and when he had gone, De Burgho, feeling himself inferior to the enemy, commenced to retreat. He fled eastwards towards Ballymena and at a little village named Connor,|| he was overtaken (Sep. 10th) and compelled to give battle. The contest was stubbornly fought, but the victory was decisive and crushing, De Burgho's army was swept off the field, his best soldiers were killed, his bravest knights were among the slain, his brother, William, was taken prisoner, a remnant of the army found refuge in the castle of Carrickfergus,\*\* the remainder with their leader fled south, harassed by the pursuing enemy; and the Red Earl, who had gone forth from Connaught with such

\* *The O'Conors of Connaught*, p. 133.

† *Ibid.*, *Annals of Clonmacnoise*.

‡ *Annals of Loch Ce*.

|| The village lies four or five miles south-east of Ballymena.

\*\* *Grace's Annals*, p. 67

confidence, returned without an army, baffled, defeated and disgraced.

Except the castle of Carrickfergus, no spot in Ulster now owed allegiance to the English; all had been conquered by the victorious Bruce, nor was his progress stayed as he marched south, through Louth and Meath, until he reached Kells.\* His opponent at that place was Roger Mortimer,† who, by his marriage with the heiress of Geneville, had inherited the lands and castles of Walter de Lacy. Mortimer's army numbered 15,000 but their opposition was futile, the tide of Bruce's success still rolled on, his enemies were scattered, and Mortimer fled to Dublin and embarked for England. Bruce pursued his journey through the north of Meath, Westmeath and Longford, then turning south again into Westmeath, he set up his headquarters at Loughseudy, rested and refreshed his army, and spent there the Christmas of 1315. He was joined by some of the De Lacy family—Hugh and Walter—who protested that they were the rightful heirs of Meath and who rejoiced at Mortimer's overthrow.‡ Early in the new year Bruce was again active and at Arscoll, a little east of Athy, he met a strong Anglo-Irish army under Butler. The number is said to have been up to 30,000, much more than could be with Bruce, but the Anglo-Irish leaders quarrelled among themselves, the result of divided counsels was weakness and confusion, and Bruce was again the victor. But provisions were wanting, these wars had swept the country bare, want of food prevented any further advance and Bruce was compelled to retreat northwards. He set up his headquarters at Dundalk and there, on the 1st of May, 1316, in the presence of the Scotch and Irish, he was crowned King of Ireland under the title of Edward I. ||

So far the career of Bruce in Ireland was one of unbroken triumph; everywhere he appeared he was victorious; but his friends had not been equally successful. The O'Tooles and O'Byrnes from the mountains of Wicklow had swooped down on the English, and Bray and Newcastle had been set in flames and the O'Mores had risen in Leix. But these different clans had fought separately, without unity of purpose or plan, and they had fought in their saffron shirts, while the English were covered with coats of mail. The result was easy to foresee. The

\* Marlborough's *Chronicle*.

† He was married to Maud de Geneville, granddaughter of Walter de Lacy.

‡ These De Lacy's may have been descended from a younger brother of Walter de Lacy, or perhaps they were illegitimately descended: (Grace's *Annals*, p. 68 note.)

|| Grace's *Annals*

O'Mores were defeated by Butler (January, 1316), leaving 800 dead on the field, the O'Tooles were defeated at Baltinglass, with the loss of 300 and about the same time a detachment of the Scots themselves was defeated in Ulster, with the loss of 300.\* But these disasters were light compared to that which overtook the O'Connors of Connaught. When Felim returned from Ulster he found a rival, Rory O'Connor, seated in his place. This Rory had got an army together, burned Sligo, destroyed the castles of Roscommon, Ballintubber, Kilcoleman and Rindown, compelled the Connaught chiefs, except MacDermott, to give him hostages, and finally, had himself crowned king with the usual ceremonies on the ancient mound of Carnfree.† Nor could Felim hope to overcome his rival, for his only ally was his foster-father, MacDermott, and MacDermott himself had to fight a rival and for a time was a fugitive from Moylurg. Early in the next year, Felim and MacDermott obtained the assistance of some of the O'Connor chiefs and also of Birmingham of Dunmore whose castle had been destroyed by Rory O'Connor in the preceding year.‡ The united army encountered Rory at Ballymoe, in the county of Galway; the mail-clad warriors of Birmingham gave Felim an advantage; Rory was defeated and once more Felim became king of the native Irish of Connaught, and without a rival to dispute his claims. He first punished those chiefs who had supported his rival, then he turned against the Anglo-Irish lords, De Exeter, Cogan, Stanton, and Lawless, and defeated them with great slaughter at Ballylahin,|| in Mayo, turned eastwards to Roscommon of which he possessed himself, and finally, mindful of his promises to Bruce, he made alliances with O'Mellaghlin of Meath, O'Brien of Thomond, and O'Rorke of Breffni, and declared, with the enthusiastic assent of all the native chiefs, that he was determined to chase the English from his native province.

During all this time the Red Earl remained inactive, but his brother William, who had been taken prisoner by Bruce, had just been released, and having returned to Connaught he concerted with Birmingham measures of defence against O'Connor's threatened attack. The opposing forces met at Athenry, on the 10th of August, 1316. In numbers the Irish were probably superior, in bravery not inferior, but in arms and discipline they were heavily over-matched. Clad in coats of mail, mounted on heavy horses

\* Grace's *Annals*; Clynns's *Annals*.

† *The O'Connor's of Connaught*, p. 134.

‡ *Annals of Loch Ce*.

|| A few miles south of the village of Foxford.



and armed with long lances, the cavalry were protected by archers, armed with the powerful cross bow, and in this order the English awaited the attack. Against such tactics and armour the tumultuous and undisciplined valour of the Irish was unavailing. With an obstinate and stupid adherence to ancient custom they were still clad in their linen tunics. They fought as their ancestors did, three centuries before at Clontarf, with sword and spear and battle-axe, and although they had been repeatedly taught by defeat the superiority of mail-clad troops, they still refused to wear coats of mail and thought it unworthy of brave men to be clad in armour.\* So obstinate a refusal to learn, so blind an adherence to what was ancient and what ought to have been obsolete, such reckless courting of inevitable disaster will not easily be paralleled. Time after time the ranks advanced only to be mown down by the murderous volleys of the crossbowmen, and then, when the advancing ranks were broken and divided, they were trampled under foot by the cavalry. Before they could even reach the English ranks and use their battle-axes on which they relied so much, they were literally swept away. No sooner were the front ranks cut down than others stepped into the vacant places only to be cut down in turn, and when evening came, 8,000 of the Irish lay dead, or dying, on the plains round Athenry.† It was the most disastrous overthrow the Irish had got since Strongbow first landed. Felim O'Connor, at the age of 23, was dead, Teige O'Kelly, chief of Hy-many, and 28 nobles of his name, O'Hara, O'Dowda, O'Madden and many of the MacDermotts. On that disastrous day every ancient family in Connaught had to mourn the loss of some of its members, and not a few families were entirely swept away. For this woful news from Connaught it was some small compensation to Bruce that Carrickfergus Castle surrendered. The English garrison had made a most heroic defence. Though constantly besieged by a large detachment of the Scots, they had stubbornly held the place and on more than one occasion had sallied forth causing loss and damage to the besiegers. Reduced to the last extremity by hunger, they had eaten hides and when these were consumed, they had killed and eaten eight Scotchmen, whom they had taken prisoners.‡ At last conquered by

\* The Irish appear to have little used archery at any time.

† *Annals of Loch Ce and Clonmacnoise. Four Masters*; Cox.

Athenry seems to have been a place of some consequence in those days, as it got a murage charter (1310), empowering the bailiffs and good men of the town to take the tolls and customs and build a wall round the town (O'Flaherty's *Iar-Connaught*, p. 266.)

‡ Grace, p. 77. (Butler's note, quotation from Pembroke.)

starvation, they yielded and Carrickfergus Castle was given up to Bruce, the last place in all Ulster from whose turrets the flag of England had waved. Their gallant conduct extorted the admiration of their foes, and although they surrendered unconditionally, the lives of all were spared. Such are the events that marked the campaign of 1316.

Towards the end of that year Robert Bruce arrived in Ireland, with large reinforcements, and, early in 1317, the two brothers, with 20,000 Scots and a large number of Irish were ready to take the field. They directed their march on Dublin, laying waste the country through which they passed, and about February, they encamped before the capital, took possession of Castleknock, made its governor—Tyrell—a prisoner and menaced the city itself; and the citizens beheld with dismay the gleam of their camp fires along the river from Kilmainham.\* Planted with natives from Bristol and modelled on that city, granted many royal charters, endowed with many privileges, protected alike from the tyranny of the Viceroys and the encroachments of the archbishops, Dublin had prospered and grown wealthy. Its mayor and burgesses and guilds rejoiced in their privileges, in the extent of their trade and commerce, and were ever loyal and attached to the English throne.† And the mayor of those days, Robert of Nottingham, besides being loyal to England, was a man of stout heart and iron will, prompt to decide, equally prompt to act, and ready to make any sacrifice rather than have the city fall into Scottish hands. The Red Earl of Ulster was then in the Abbey of St. Mary's within the city, old and dispirited, without any of the fire or energy of his former days. His daughter was married to Robert Bruce and the Mayor of Dublin felt convinced that he was secretly partial to the Scots, and therefore disloyal to England, and that this best explained his defeat, and his subsequent inactivity; and getting together a band of citizens as stout-hearted as himself, the Mayor entered St. Mary's Abbey, killed seven of the Earl's retainers, who resented his entrance as an intrusion, and then seizing the Earl himself cast him into prison.‡ When he had in this vigorous fashion put down a possible enemy within the city gates, he proceeded to take measures against the enemy outside. He demolished the Abbey of St. Thomas, and with the stones repaired the city walls; armed with torches, he and his companions set

\* Grace, pp. 79–81.

† Gilbert's *Historic and Municipal Documents*.

‡ The King sent special orders to his Viceroy that the Dublin citizens were not to be punished in any way for what they had done (*Historical and Municipal Documents*, p. 398). On the contrary some of their taxes were remitted (p. 405–12.)

fire to the wooden buildings on the city outskirts, to the church of St. John and the chapel of Magdalen,\* and some of the Scots, who made an attempt to enter, perished in the flames of the burning buildings. To capture a city so capably defended would be no easy task. Bruce shrank from the encounter and the sacrifices it would entail, and turning aside from Dublin he passed through Leixlip and Naas into Carlow and Kilkenny, then west from Callan, and finally halted before the city of Limerick.†

But famine was raging in the land, the country around was waste and bare, the cattle killed, the crops destroyed, the cravings of hunger had so far silenced the voice of natural affection that women were known to have killed and eaten their own children,‡ the terrible pestilence, which visited Ireland in the fourteenth century, had already appeared and already had claimed thousands as its victims, and famished with hunger, thinned by pestilence or weakened by disease, the Scots had but little chance of capturing a city, so well fortified and defended as Limerick. And to remain before the walls as a besieging army was to court inevitable disaster. The example of the Dublin citizens had a salutary effect on the Anglo-Irish lords, the efforts of Lord John Hotham, who had been sent specially from England for the purpose, had brought them together, and Geraldine and Butler and De la Poer had agreed to suspend their quarrels and to unite for their common interests against their common enemy. As a result an army of 30,000 men was assembled at Kilkenny, ready to take the field,|| and to darken still further the prospect before the Scots, Roger Mortimer with full powers as Viceroy had landed at Loughal with 15,000 men. In these circumstances the only safety for the Bruces was to retreat, which they did by way of Cashel, Kildare and Trim, until finally they reached Dundalk, about the month of May. Why this army of fugitives, thinned and weakened by disease and famine, was not attacked by the Anglo-Irish may excite surprise. But the memory of Bannockburn was recent and vivid, Edward Bruce had been invariably victorious, and even with such an army the Bruces, though not formidable, were feared. Besides, between the new Viceroy and his allies harmony did not reign, for Mortimer was kindly disposed to the Irish and wished to extend to them the English laws, the last thing which the Anglo-Irish lords wished to do.\*\*

\* Grace's *Annals*, p. 79.

† Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 140.

‡ Grace, p. 93. Even the corpses were taken out of the graves and cooked and eaten.

|| *Ibid.*

\*\* Grace's *Annals*, pp. 84-5. (Editor's note.)



Robert Bruce returned to Scotland promising to come with reinforcements next year, and King Edward remained inactive for a whole year at Dundalk. He was compelled to remain idle, for an army cannot fight without food, and the famine still raged. A similar reason will explain the inactivity of his foes. But, in 1318, there was abundance of food, both sides became active, and the English forces, under John de Birmingham, advanced north to attack Bruce. They were far superior in numbers and Donal O'Neill advised Bruce to retire north and await the promised reinforcements from Scotland. The leaders, both Irish and Scotch, seconded O'Neill's efforts, foreseeing defeat against such an army as De Birmingham's. But Bruce was inexorable. Strong-willed, self-sufficient, vain of his victories, he was filled with that presumption which is often the herald of disaster and declared that at all costs he would give battle. The two armies met at Faughart,\* near Dundalk. While the battle raged, a powerful English knight—Sir John de Maupas—rushed into the Scottish ranks, sought out Edward Bruce, with whom he engaged in single combat, and both fell mortally wounded.† Whatever doubt there might have been as to the result of the battle was now over; this event was decisive, and the Scots and Irish retreated, leaving 2,000 either dead or wounded on the field.‡ Donal O'Neill reached Tirowen, the Irish dispersed to their homes and the body of Bruce was taken by De Birmingham, the head cut off, salted, and sent as a present to the King of England. De Lacy and Sir John de Culwick, who had fought with Bruce, were taken prisoners and starved, each being allowed but three meals of the worst bread and three draughts of foul water on alternate days until life became extinct.|| For his victory at Athenry Richard de Birmingham was created Lord of Athenry, and John de Birmingham for his victory over Bruce was created Earl of Louth, and Baron of Ardee. And thus terminated in disaster the invasion of Edward Bruce.

\* Famous as the birth-place of St. Bridget.

† Gilbert's *Viceroy's*, pp. 144-6.

‡ Dowling's *Annals*.

|| Gilbert's *Viceroy's*, p. 147. It appears Hugh and Walter de Lacy escaped to Scotland; it was *John de Lacy* who was starved;



## CHAPTER XXI.

### *The English Colonists turn Irish.*

The evil effects of Bruce's invasion, especially in Ulster—The O'Neills and O'Donnells—The O'Neills of Clanneboy—State of Connaught—Continued quarrelling among the chiefs—the De Burghos—The Earl of Ulster murdered—Its consequences—Rivalries of the O'Connors and others—O'Kelly of Hy-many and the Poets—The English defeated in Desmond—State of the Colonists throughout Leinster—and of the natives—The Anglo-Irish lords—Their powers and their quarrels—Strong measures of the viceroy, Lucy—The Earl of Desmond—Exacts Coyne and Livery—Edward III. and the Irish—Viceroyalty of Sir Ralph Ufford—The Anglo-Irish adopt Irish customs—Reasons for this change—Viceroyalty of the Earl of Desmond.

WHATEVER were the ills from which Ireland suffered in the early part of the fourteenth century, and the Remonstrance of Donal O'Neill shows that they were neither few nor unimportant—these ills were increased and intensified by the unfortunate invasion of Edward Bruce. If he had succeeded, if he had established one stable government, if he had replaced disorder and anarchy by order and law, it may be that the recollection of his plunderings and depredations and the ills that followed in their train would have been forgotten in happier times. But he failed; with failure men often associate discredit, just as a certain glamour surrounds success, and it has been Bruce's misfortune that his memory and his deeds are regarded by Anglo-Irish and Irish historian with equal abhorrence. Both Clynns\* and Grace,† who wrote from amidst the Anglo-Irish, and whose Annals reflect the views of those among whom they lived and perhaps whose blood they shared, have dwelt on the

\* Clynns was first guardian of the Franciscan Monastery of Carrig in Kilkenny, founded by the Earl of Ormond (1336). A mere Irishman would hardly be placed in such a position. (Harris's *Ware*, Vol. II. *Writers of Ireland*, p. 83.)

† Grace was probably a native of Kilkenny, where the Graces of Gracefield lived, the family were descended from Raymond le Gros (Introd. to Grace's *Annals*.)

frightful havoc wrought by the Scottish invasion ; and they rejoice at the victory of Ardee, where the power of Bruce was overthrown. But the words of the native Annalists are equally strong, and the condemnation of the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, of *Loch Cé* and of the *Four Masters* are in almost identical terms. "There was not," says the first of these Annalists, "a better deed that redounded better or more for the good of the kingdom, since the creation of the world and since the banishment of the Fomorians out of this land done Ireland than the killing of Edward Bruce, for there reigned scarcity of victuals, breach of promises, ill performance of covenants and the loss of men and women throughout the whole realm for the space of three years and a half that he bore sway. In so much that men did commonly eat one another for want of sustenance during his time."

Ulster and Leinster were especially harassed, for it was over their fields the opposing forces had marched and countermarched, but there was no district so wasted as Ulster and no people suffered so much as the English colonists in the north-east of that province. These colonists were numerous ; on both sides of the Bann they had driven the natives from their possessions and had appropriated the best of the lands. Planted and protected by the De Burghos, whose feudal castles studded the whole district and whose vassals had attained the position of powerful feudal lords, they were the first object of the invader's attack, and when the Red Earl was defeated they were at the invader's mercy. Left to themselves, the Mandevilles, the Logans and the Savages fought for the protection of their fields and fought bravely, but whatever success they met with was transient ; they were fighting against overwhelming odds, and before the hurricane of Scottish invasion both castle and cottage went down. The churches were burned, the feudal castle was rifled, the farmhouse destroyed, the crops wasted and ruined, the cattle driven off, and lord and vassal, overwhelmed in the same disasters, were reduced to the same level of indigence.

It would be strange if the O'Neills of Tirowen did not cast longing eyes eastwards, and take advantage of the weakness and confusion that prevailed among their foes. There were many circumstances in their favour. The English Viceroy at Dublin received no support from England and was therefore weak ; the Anglo-Irish lords quarrelled among themselves, the most powerful of them all—the Red Earl—was old and feeble, his martial spirit and energy gone, his sword and lance laid aside. He lived in the monastery of Athassel, in Tipperary, spent his time in penance and prayer, and in that retreat (1326), his stormy life was closed.\* Three years later, the dreaded Earl of Louth,

\* Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 163.



the conqueror of Bruce, was murdered\* and the same fate befel (in 1333) the young Earl of Ulster.† Between the O'Neills and the dispirited and weakened Colonists nothing intervened, and if the O'Neills and the O'Donnells could unite, or if the O'Neills would cease quarrelling themselves, the English colonists would quickly disappear. But disunion still continued. Two factions of the O'Neills fought, in 1319, and Donal O'Neill was driven from Tirowen, though he was able to return the same year. When he died (1325) there was the inevitable contest between two rival chiefs for the headship of Tirowen, as there was between the O'Donnells of Tirconnell, a few years later (1333). A few years later still, (1339), the old rivalry between the O'Neills and the O'Donnells, which had slumbered so long, was again revived and war and battles were the result; and twice in the years that followed (1343-1348), did the O'Donnells break out into war though the quarrels were between themselves and not with the O'Neills.‡ But through all these years the Irish were making their way eastwards, and the English colony was gradually losing ground. An energetic and warlike branch of the O'Neills, the descendants of Hugh Boy O'Neill, and called from him the O'Neills of Clanaboy, passed from their homes in Tirowen across the Bann, expelled the English out of the "barony of Tuscard, now called the Route,"|| in North Antrim, passed thence to Carrickfergus, crossed the Lagan and chased the Savages from the Lower Ards into a small district, the Upper Ards, eastward of Strangford Lough. To resist the advancing wave of Irish attack one of the Savages proposed to build plenty of strong castles, behind which they would be secure, but his son had already learned to imitate the Irish; he was recklessly brave, protested that he would fight, like the Irish, in the open, and bade his father remember that a castle of bones was far better than a castle of stones. But the Savages and their followers were overwhelmed, their castles were all thrown down, the Irish occupied these lands from which their ancestors had been driven, and before the second half of the fourteenth century opened, the English settlements along the Bann had disappeared, and the extensive territory of the Savages had shrunk to the narrow limits of the Upper Ards, and even here their position was insecure.

In Connaught the march of events was somewhat similar. At the disastrous battle of Athenry, the family from whom the

\* Ware's *Annals*.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Four Masters*.

|| Sir J. Davies' *Historical Tracts*, p. 157.

kings of Connaught had so long been taken—the descendants of Cahal Crowderg—were nearly extinguished, Connaught lay helpless at the feet of De Burgho and Birmingham, and in every house throughout the province there was mourning. Yet the surviving princes of the O'Connor clan would not compose their differences; no two could agree, and the miserable remnant of this family, who had so long afflicted Connaught with their broils, still quarrelled over the miserable remnant of their ancient possessions. If they hoped to hold even what was left them, still more if they hoped to win back what was lost, if even they wished to avert the final ruin of their race and name, it was necessary that they should be of one mind, that by mutual arrangement, by the sacrifice of personal feeling and the extinction of personal jealousy, by patience, by perseverance in common action and under a single head, they should present a firm front to the foe. But such was not the tradition of their house; it was one of discord and turmoil, and the surviving members of the O'Connor family were resolved to maintain its evil traditions. A cousin of the dead king, Felim, by name Rory, proclaimed himself King. He was attacked by William de Burgho and deposed; he then submitted and was acknowledged King by the same De Burgho, who was strong enough to play the role of kingmaker. But MacDermott of Moylurg refused to acknowledge this creature of De Burgho and set up Turlogh O'Connor (1317), who in his turn was defeated and deposed by another O'Connor—Cahal—ancestor of the O'Connors of Sligo. For years this prince had to fight many battles and many enemies, his precarious position was often threatened, and finally he was defeated (1324), by the deposed Turlogh O'Connor, who then assumed the title of King.\* To accentuate the evils which afflicted Connaught, there was, in addition to these contests, war between the O'Farrells of Leitrim (1323), in which they so weakened each other that Birmingham invaded their territories, causing great damage. And the O'Rorkes and O'Reillys were at war in 1324 and again three years later.†

To repress all these conflicts, to chastise all these warlike clans—the O'Rorkes and O'Reillys and MacRannells and MacDermotts and MacCostellos—even to maintain his position among them was no easy matter, yet Turlogh O'Connor was an able man, inheriting some of the best qualities of his ancestors, and, in the midst of wars and conflicts innumerable, he maintained his position for twenty years. He must have rejoiced that (in 1325) William de Burgho died.‡ He had dropped his

\* *The O'Conors of Connaught*, pp. 137–140.

† *Annals of Loch Ce. Four Masters.*

‡ *Ibid.*, at 1324.

Norman name of De Burgho and assumed the plainer one of Burke, he spoke the Irish language, adopted Irish customs and was as warlike and quarrelsome as any Irish chief could be. But Turlogh's troubles were not ended from this source, for Burke had left a son, Walter, who seems to have inherited all his father's qualities, good and bad, and who was so Irish and so powerful, that he proposed to the native chiefs that Turlogh be deposed and that he himself be appointed King; and when this was not agreed to he made war on Turlogh.\* The latter was aided by the Earl of Ulster, and Walter was defeated, but a little later, or perhaps in the same year (1330), they were again at war. Turlogh and MacDermott on one side, Burke and MacCostelloe on the other; success and defeat alternated, and then there was peace. The next year, perhaps in revenge, Burke ravaged Moylurg, which was then without a capable ruler, as Mulrony MacDermott had resigned the chieftaincy and became a monk.† A year later, Walter Burke's career ended in disaster. He was treacherously taken by his kinsman, the young Earl of Ulster, brought to the Earl's castle of Innishowen‡ and flung into its prison where he was starved to death. Revenge followed quick on the heels of assassination, and murder was followed by murder. A sister of Walter Burke's was married to Mandeville of Ulster, and with a woman's earnestness she pleaded for revenge, and as the young earl was proceeding to Mass on June 6th, 1333, he was set upon by Mandeville and his servants, and with one blow from behind his skull was cloven in. The murderers were taken and put to death; "some were hanged, others shot and others torn asunder to avenge his death."||

The death of this young Earl was far-reaching in its consequences. Besides his possessions in Ulster, Tipperary and Kilkenny, he had vast estates in Connaught. He had left an infant daughter, and by the provisions of feudal tenure the King of England, as immediate lord of all these great vassals, had the right to possess and manage these lands, during the minority of De Burgho's child. But this was an arrangement in which the two most powerful of the Connaught Burkes, Ulick and Edmond, did not intend to acquiesce, and boldly renouncing their allegiance to the English king, they renounced their name and nation, seized upon the earl's castles and lands, adopted the Irish mode of tenure—tanistry and gavelkind—called themselves MacWilliam Oughter and MacWilliam Eighter,

\* *The O'Conors of Connaught*, p. 142.

† *Annals of Loch Ce*.

‡ *Ibid.* The castle was at Greencastle, near the mouth of Lough Foyle.

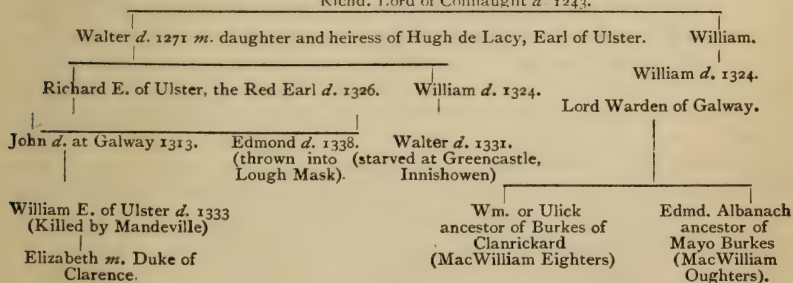
|| *Four Masters*; *Grace's Annals*.



and in the sight of the English garrison at Athlone cast aside their distinctive Norman dress and arms and assumed the saffron robes of an Irish chief.\* Their example was widely followed. Birmingham assumed the name of MacFerris, De Exeter became MacJordan, Nangle became MacCostelloe, the English Colonists, who refused to act similarly were everywhere overborne; and when Jordan d'Exeter was asked to furnish supplies from Connaught he had to report to the English king "that no money could be got as the whole province had fallen into Irish hands.†

But though the whole fabric of English power in Connaught was thus destroyed the province was not destined to have peace. Among the native chiefs the spirit of faction was still strong, the rivalries and jealousies of the O'Connors seemed interminable and, perhaps, even a more potent element of discord was the turbulence and rapacity of the MacWilliam Burkes. Edmond of that name was especially turbulent. He wasted all West Connaught (1335), and three years later he captured the only surviving son of the Red Earl, in the Friar's house at Ballintubber, brought him to an island on Lough Mask, put him into a bag, tied a stone round it and flung him like a dog into the waters of the lake.‡ This act of murder lost him the sympathy and support of many in Connaught; the next year he was attacked by Turlogh O'Connor and driven out of the province, after which he got together a few ships and led a wandering and reckless life of piracy along the coast, and during the years that followed went to Scotland and earned the nickname of Albanach, or Scotch. The same year Turlogh O'Connor married

\* The De Burgho's Genealogical Table. Wm. FitzAdelm de Burgho died 1204.  
Richd. Lord of Connaught d. 1243.



*Vid.* Hardiman's *History of Galway*, pp. 54-56.

O'Flaherty's *Iar Connaught*, pp. 32, 46, 47, 250. Grace's *Annals*, p. 161. Richey's *Lectures on Irish History* (first series), pp. 177-8.

† O'Connor's of *Connaught*, p. 143.

‡ O'Flaherty's *Iar Connaught*, pp. 47-48. He had got a grant of the late Earl's lands in Connaught during the minority of his infant daughter for payment of £200 a year. (O'Flaherty, p. 250.)

the wife of the Earl's son, who was drowned in Lough Mask, divorced his own wife and he, too, becoming unpopular, enemies arose against him, until (1342) there was general war in Connaught. Turlogh was deposed and Hugh O'Connor put in his place, but the next year Turlogh defeated and deposed his rival, though he was not long at peace, for in a quarrel between the MacRannells of Leitrim he took sides with one of the contestants and was killed, thus ending his troubled career, after having been for nearly twenty years the head of the native Irish of Connaught.\* In the meantime there were various quarrels between other chiefs. The O'Kellys were quarrelling among themselves (1340), so also were the O'Rorkes at war with the O'Connors and with the MacDermotts of Moylurg, O'Kelly and Birmingham were at war (1343), in the two succeeding years the MacRannells, split up into contending factions, were at war, Edmond Burke, back again from his travels and piracies, was fighting Birmingham and the O'Connors combined (1348), while some of the O'Connors and MacDermott also were at war (1349); and to complete the misery of Moylurg it was desolated by a pestilence as well as wasted by the horrors of war.†

In the succeeding years all is confusion and all is strife. There were several claimants of the O'Connors for the headship of their clans in which we can with difficulty discover that Hugh, son of Turlogh, succeeded his father and held some shadowy authority from 1345 to 1356, Hugh after him, for twelve years and then Roderick, who is set down as king from 1368 to 1384.‡ We also discover that the Burkes fought among themselves (1355), in which year Edmond Albanach died. A few years later Burke and Birmingham combined waged war against Cahal O'Connor and (in 1362) the O'Connors, weary of fighting among themselves, suspended their quarrels for a brief period, and as if to show what they could do if united, they crossed the Shannon desolated Meath and then, turning south, defeated the English and almost destroyed the city of Kilkenny. This monotonous and dreary prospect of discord and strife, of petty wars and petty ambitions is relieved by one fact which the Annalists have rightly recorded and which, like the oasis in the desert, is in such striking and agreeable contrast to the waste of desert which surrounds it. In 1351, William O'Kelly of Hy-Many invited all the Irish poets, brehons, bards, harpers, gamblers and jesters and others of this kind to his house at Christmas, where everyone of them was well received and

\* *Annals of Loch Ce.*

† *Ibid.* *Four Masters*;

‡ *The O'Connors of Connaught*, pp. 146-8.

extolled their host for his bounty, and one of them composed certain Irish verses in his praise. In a province wasted by eternal war such assemblies, where the contests were only those of wisdom and wit and learning, were all too rare ; and well for the province it would have been if it was such contests, and such only, that the historian had to record.\*

The skill of a Munster chief, Connor O'Dea, and the bravery of the Dalcassians had destroyed English power in West Thomond (1318) at the battle of Dysert O'Dea.† De Clare was killed, his lands and castles taken possession of, his widow left the province, taking with her all she could, and Thomond, west of the Shannon, was once more the land of the O'Briens. But the O'Briens themselves could not agree, and in the battle which proved so fatal to De Clare, Murtogh O'Brien and Brian fought on opposite sides, the latter being on De Clare's side. He was able and ambitious, and Murtogh, who had triumphed, wisely directed his opponents thoughts across the Shannon and helped him to conquer East Thomond, that stretch of territory taking in the modern baronies of Arra and the Ormonds, and with his headquarters somewhere near Nenagh, Brian lived for years in peace. His first contest was with the De Burghos and those he defeated (1322), but a little later (1328), they again attacked him and with increased strength, for they were assisted by some of the O'Briens, by the MacNamaras and by the O'Connors of Connaught. Brian wisely sought and obtained the aid of the Earl of Desmond and again he defeated his foes, after which the De Burghos left him unmolested. His ability and success won for him the respect of the Dalcassian chiefs, and when Murtogh, his old rival, died, Brian became chief of all Thomond which he ruled without opposition until 1350, when, in some obscure contest, east of the Shannon, he was killed. Once only during these years was the peace of Thomond broken—in 1334—when a combination of Connaught chiefs entered the district, attacked MacNamara, one of its chiefs, and in their rage and cruelty set fire to a church in which 80 persons and two priests had sought refuge, and church and people and priests perished in the flames.‡

In Leinster and part of Munster the destruction of English power was not so rapid or complete as in the other provinces, but it was growing weaker, and the native chiefs were able to hold the lands they had, and were even recovering some of those they had lost. The O'Carrolls in Ely O'Carroll were able to

\* *Annals of Loch Ce: Annals of Clonmacnoise.*

† Grace's *Annals*. Gilbert's *Viceroy's*, p. 149. White's *History of Clare*, p 138.

‡ *Four Masters*.



defy Ormond and all his power,\* the O'Mores were as firm in Leix as their own rock-built castle of Dunamais;† the O'Nolans held their own in Carlow‡ and were able to inflict a serious defeat (1322) on Birmingham and his allies; the O'Tooles and O'Byrnes in their mountain fortresses at Wicklow, defied all attack, and a chief of the MacMurrough family was acquiring such power that in the not distant future that family would overshadow all Leinster. In this portion of Ireland all was confusion. The native chief and the English lord lived side by side, the brehon and the English judge, each administering his own law. There was the English king's sheriff and the Anglo-Irish lord's sheriff under the same English noble, there was English and Irish law, for he ruled English and Irish, was an English lord and an Irish chief at the same time; and not infrequently, in the arrogance of his power, recognised no law but his own will. The natives who lived under the native chiefs had the same law as their ancestors had and wanted none other, but those who lived on the borders of the English possessions, or under the rule of an Anglo-Irish lord, had much to endure. If *they* killed or robbed an Englishman they could be punished, even put to death, but an Englishman might kill or rob one of them with impunity, and the cases were many where the English culprit had but to plead that the complainant was Irish and he himself was allowed to go free.|| Some natives had purchased charters of denization\*\* by virtue of which they became English subjects, and entitled to the protection of English law, others had repeatedly petitioned that this privilege and protection should be extended to them, but in vain, for though both of the first Edwards were willing, the opposition of the Anglo-Irish lords was effectively interposed.†† Nor did they fare better under Edward III., for though he transmitted to his Viceroy, Darcy, an ordinance (March 3rd., 1331), declaring that there should be one law for Irish and English, it was similarly obstructed and might as well never have been

\* They gained an important victory over the English in 1318. (*Annals of Clonmacnoise. Four Masters. Clynne* (1317).

† Three miles east of Maryborough, the O'More's territory of Leix was situated in the south-east of Queen's County.

‡ Their territory corresponded to the present barony of Forth (*Book of Rights*, p. 211.)

|| Davies' *Historical Tracts*, pp. 83-85. For instance, when Thomas Butler brought an action for certain goods against Robert de Almain, the defendant pleaded he was bound to nothing, as the plaintiff was not of English descent, and it was this question which was *first submitted to the jury*.

\*\* For such charters there was usually a money payment exacted:

†† Leland, Vol. I., pp. 244-6, 289-90.

issued.\* The Anglo-Irish lords coveted the lands of the Irish and wished to appropriate them; they could not do so with impunity if the Irish as well as themselves could appeal to an English court, and they were able to convince the English king that it was the best policy to regard the Irish as aliens and enemies, and to harass them with continual war. Such was the position of the natives—outcasts and outlaws in their own land. But even the English settlers had much reason to complain, and in a petition sent to England (1316), they complain that if one Englishman killed another or robbed him, even of twelve pence halfpenny, his life was forfeited by English law, but that an Irishman for such offences was often allowed to go free, on payment of a fine, and that in some cases a fine of twenty shillings was imposed. And they deduced from this that an Irishman might kill an Englishman, almost with impunity, and that the life of an Englishman living in their midst was insecure.† They add that the Anglo-Irish lords preferred fining an Irishman to killing him, for his dead body was no use to them, but by fining him they could grow rich.

Constantly engaged in war with Scotland, meditating a war with France, weak, irresolute, incapable, a slave to a succession of favourites, deserted by his wife, harassed by his nobles, Edward II. during his whole reign, bestowed little attention on Ireland. He was unable to place at the disposal of the Viceroy a force strong enough to make him respected. He was forced even to withdraw troops from Ireland for his wars, to tolerate and even to flatter the Anglo-Irish lords, for if they revolted English power in Ireland was at an end; and the wars and conquests of Edward III. compelled *him* to act similarly. Instead of curtailing the power of these lords and restricting their privileges, greater power and privileges were given them, and new honors heaped upon them. Butler was made Earl of Ormond,‡ FitzJohn Fitzgerald, Earl of Kildare,|| FitzThomas Fitzgerald, Earl of Desmond,\*\* and over the districts from which they drew their titles they were palatine lords. Each had the power to punish his own subjects, they created knights, appointed sheriffs and seneschals, erected their scaffolds, set up their independent courts, made peace and war, and their sheriff and his officers regarded the King's sheriff—the sheriff of the cross as he was called—with disdain, even as their master

\* Grace's *Annals*, p: 119, note.

† *Ibid.*, p. 85.

‡ In 1322. (Carte's *Ormond, Introduction*); His father had been created Earl of Carrick.

|| About 1315.

\*\* In 1329.

despised the King's Viceroy at Dublin.\* These palatine lords, of whom there were nine, had soon outgrown the position of subjects and had attained to the power of kings. Bloated with privilege, intoxicated with power, they knew no restriction but their own caprice and obeyed no mandate but their passions. They made war on the natives as they pleased, but more frequently on each other, and from Desmond to Dublin the whole country was shaken by their conflicts. These lords could no longer fling the retort at the Irish that it was the Irish only who quarrelled, for they themselves were as turbulent as the Irish in their worst days.

It was necessary (in June 1325), to issue a King's writ commanding Arnold Power and the Earl of Kildare from making war on one another, for they were already levying men for the purpose. Another writ of the same character had to be issued in the following December, but two years later war broke out. At one of their assemblies Arnold Power had called the Earl of Desmond a rhymer. Desmond determined to be avenged and got the aid of the Birminghams and of Ormond, while Power was aided by the De Burghos.† The De Burghos were defeated by Desmond, many of them killed and the rest driven into Connaught, while Power's possessions in Tipperary and Ossory were wasted and plundered by the combined forces of Butler and Birmingham, and himself escaped to Waterford, a fugitive. Two years later (1329), De Geneville wasted Birmingham's territory of Carbury.‡ Nor did these Anglo-Irish lords stop even at murder; and when the Earl of Louth was murdered (1329), and the Earl of Ulster (1333), it was not the work of the natives; but in each case it was one of their own race that struck the assassin's blow. Taking advantage of these dissensions, the native chiefs took courage, though they were not always successful in their attacks. The victory of the O'Carrolls (1318), and of the O'Nolans (1322) was followed a few years later (1331), by the O'Tooles capturing Ferns, Cullagh and Arklow,|| and in the meantime (1327), Donal MacMurrough was proclaimed King of Leinster, and swore he would go through all Ireland and subdue it.\*\* As a counterpoise to these successes, the O'Connors of Offaly were severely defeated (1321), by the English of Louth and Meath,†† and Donal MacMurrough was taken prisoner (1327) and lodged in the

\* Davies' *Historical Tracts*, pp. 114-16;

† Grace's *Annals*, pp. 103-4-5.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

|| Grace's and Dowling's *Annals*:

\*\* Grace, p. 107.

†† *Annals of Clonmacnoise*.



government prison at Dublin, though, aided by one Adam Nangle, he soon effected his escape, for which negligence Nangle was hanged.\* Two years later, Butler wasted the country of the O'Nolans, and the Viceroy, Darcy, attacked and defeated the O'Byrnes of Wicklow.† Such was the disturbed state of the country that one Hamund Archdeacon, on being fined £40 for not attending the parliament at Dublin, got the fine remitted because he was able to show that he could not attend on account of the wars.‡

The outlook in Ireland was so stormy and the prospects of English power so gloomy, that Edward III. determined to come to Ireland himself,|| and in the meantime (1331), sent a new Viceroy, Sir Anthony Lucy, who was to use strong measures both against native and Anglo-Irish; and he was but a short time in office until he proceeded to act with vigour. He summoned a parliament at Dublin and issued the usual writs. Desmond and others refused to attend; he adjourned the parliament to Kilkenny, but they still remained away; and then, making his way rapidly to Limerick, he seized the Earl of Desmond, Mandeville, Walter de Burgho and William and Walter Birmingham, and flung them all into prison. William Birmingham was tried and executed; his brother, being an ecclesiastic, pleaded its privileges with success and was allowed to go free, and Desmond, after a period of confinement, was sent to England. But these vigorous measures were not long continued. Edward III. had no intention of coming to Ireland and sought for other fields for his ambition; Lucy was recalled and a Viceroy of a milder type, Sir John Darcy, was appointed his successor (1332); the De Burghos and Mandeville were liberated, and Desmond came back to Ireland and so far from English power having gained, the reverse happened, for the Earl of Ulster was killed (1333), and his relatives cast off their allegiance to England.\*

During his first viceroyalty (1330), Sir John Darcy, not having sufficient forces to fight the Irish, called to his aid the Earl of Desmond, then the most potent of the Anglo-Irish lords. Desmond was an Irish chief, as well as an English lord, and it was in the former capacity his aid was sought, more as an ally than as a subject. With an army, many of whom must have been Irish, and amounting it was said, to 10,000 he assisted

\* Grace's *Annals*. D'Arcy Magee, *Art MacMurrough* p. 4.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

|| Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 178.

\*\* Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, pp. 179-82. Grace's *Annals*. Leland, Vol. I:4 p. 293.

the Viceroy ; but the treasury at Dublin was empty, the Viceroy was unable to pay Desmond and his soldiers, and the Earl had recourse to the Irish system of coyne and livery. His soldiers had fought for the English colonists. On these they were now quartered—men and horses—eating and drinking at their expense, wasting their crops, consuming the food and forage required for themselves and their own cattle and horses, dissipating their wealth, and guilty, as mercenary soldiers will, of murders, robberies and rapes. Their exactions, while they ruined the English settlers, enriched Desmond and increased his power, for many of the settlers gave up their lands, which were immediately handed over to Irishmen, who held them under the Irish system of tenure and willingly recognised Desmond as their chief. And in a short time his rule was thus recognised over Kerry, Limerick, and most part of Cork and Waterford. Such rapid advancement excited the jealousy and roused the cupidity of the Earl of Ormond, who quickly followed in Desmond's footsteps, exacted coyne and livery in his turn, rooted out the English settlers ; and over Tipperary and part of Kilkenny Irish customs and Irish laws reigned. The Earl of Kildare was not slow to copy these examples and established the same exactions and the same customs with the same results over Kildare and part of Meath.\* To complete the ruin of the English colonists, they were harassed and taxed by rapacious government officials, to such an extent that Edward III. himself sent a letter (1336) to his Viceroy, Chancellor and Treasurer, in which he states that it had been shown to him by trustworthy men, "that they and his other ministers, regarding the persons of men and yielding to men and not to right, had made one law for the rich and another for the poor, and had allowed the strong to oppress the weak, to usurp the royal authority, to detain the king's debts and to perpetrate various crimes ; and that instead of protecting the poor, who were willing to be obedient subjects, they harassed and aggrieved them against all justice to their great loss, and thereby gave a pernicious example to others."† Burdened with these accumulated evils, some of the English settlers left the country altogether, and others joined the Irish, intermarried with them, adopted their customs and their laws, but all were lost to the English government in Ireland.

The policy of Edward III. towards Ireland was a mixture of caresses and coercion, of fitful periods of severity and kindness. The appointment of Ormond as Viceroy ‡ was followed by the

\* Davies' *Historical Tracts*, pp. 152-6.

† Grace's *Annals*, p. 129, note.

‡ He was only deputy for Sir John Darcy (1329):

appointment of Lucy; the execution of William Birmingham and the imprisonment of Desmond, only to be again followed by the release of Desmond and the recall of the stern Viceroy. But after a few years harsh measures were again used. In 1339, there was universal war in Ireland.\* Some of the Geraldines joined with the Irish fought the Earl of Desmond, the O'Dempseys and the people of Kildare were at war, and the next year the MacMurroghs and the O'Nolans continued † to war upon the English. These constant wars, this perpetual unrest, the shrinkage of his territories in Ireland drained the resources, as well as tried the patience, of the English king. He blamed, and not without justice, the Anglo-Irish lords for much of the trouble; because some of them had adopted Irish ways, he thought all were disloyal to England and he issued a decree to his Viceroy, Sir John Darcy (July 27th, 1341), directing him to remove from their offices in Ireland "all Irishmen and all Englishmen who had married in Ireland, and had lands and possessions in that country but had nothing in England, and to appoint in their places Englishmen, who had lands and possessions in England, and that no future alienation of the royal demesnes or other possessions in the King's hands should be made without a proper writ of inquiry." He also revoked all grants made by his father or himself "by which measure almost the whole of Ireland was moved to immediate insurrection against the King." ‡ To set up a barrier between the English by birth and the English by descent was not to promote peace but discord; to brand with indignity and disqualification the descendants of those whose swords had first won dominion in Ireland for the English crown, was to rouse the hatred and extinguish the loyalty of those powerful Anglo-Irish lords; and at a parliament held in Dublin by the Viceroy, in the October of that year, Desmond and his friends refused to attend.|| Instead of doing so they called a parliament of their own at Kilkenny, protested their loyalty to England; and by a petition to the King they acknowledged the disorders of Ireland, and pointed out that it was the King's officers—the English by birth in whom he trusted so much—who were to blame. In this petition they ask the King, how a land full of war can be governed by a man ignorant of war, as many of the Viceroys were, how a King's officer can in a short time acquire great wealth, and why the King is not made richer

\* Grace's *Annals*.

† Clynn's *Annals*, 1340-42. The O'Mores also recovered all Leix and expelled the settlers.

‡ Grace's *Annals*, pp. 133-4.

|| Gilbert's *Viceroys*, p. 192.



by Ireland; and they give instances of the persecutions and peculations of these officials of English birth, adding that the settlers of English descent were so impoverished that they could scarcely live, "par grevance de ditz enemys (the Irish) dune part et excesse doffice de ministres dautre part." Impressed either by justice or expediency—probably the latter—Edward III. favourably received the Prior of Kilmainham and Thomas de Wogan, who were the bearers of this petition, revoked his letter of the previous July, and even dismissed some of the officials, amongst them two judges of the Common Pleas.\*

The good relations established between Edward and the Anglo-Irish did not last long. In preparation for his wars in France, he had summoned Desmond, Kildare and many others to meet him at Portsmouth (1344) with some men-at-arms and hobelars, who were to receive the King's pay while at war; the Anglo-Irish neglected the summons† and irritated by their refusal, Edward appointed Sir Ralph Ufford, his Irish Viceroy, and bade him deal sternly with these Anglo-Irish lords. Ufford was well fitted for such work, a man unjust and greedy of gain, doing everything by force, giving justice to none, robbing rich and poor; and the chronicles of the time mention that all the time he was in Ireland it rained, that when he died (1346), it was a cause of joy to all men, and that immediately the weather became fine.‡ It was said that his harsh measures were prompted by his wife, the widow of the murdered Earl of Ulster,|| who no doubt did not love the Irish, whether of Irish or English descent; but whatever the cause, or whoever the instigator, his measures were harsh and stern, and the memory of them was bitter. He called a parliament at Dublin which Desmond did not attend, and taking this as sufficient excuse he marched south (1345), ravaged the Earl's lands, seized his castles in Kerry, hanged his seneschal, Sir John Cotterell, and the warders of his castles, Power and Grant,\*\* deprived of their possessions all those who had previously gone bail for him; and by treachery captured the Earl of Kildare and cast him into prison in Dublin. When Ufford died, his widow had to carry away his remains secretly to England fearing that the rage of the populace might be directed against his dead body. A milder type of Viceroy—Sir John Morris—was appointed, the Earl of Kildare's aid was

\* Grace's *Annals*, pp. 134-5.

† *Ibid.*, p. 136. They must not have *altogether* refused, for there were 6,000 Irish footmen in Edward's Army at Crecy, but evidently they did not do *all* that was expected of them.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 137-41.

|| Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, pp. 198-202

\*\* Clynns's *Annals*.

sought and obtained by Edward III. ; and he distinguished himself so much at the siege of Calais, that he was knighted by the King.\*

These harsh measures of various viceroys and the harsh decrees of English kings irritated the Anglo-Irish lords and alienated their sympathies from England ; the milder measures which followed, they took as a proof of English weakness and of their own power; the petty exactions and oppressions of English-born officials disgusted them, and turning from England, they abandoned English ways, and became more Irish than the Irish themselves. They spoke the language of the Irish, adopted their manners and habits, practised their law, fostered their children, and stood gossips, or sponsors ; and when they went into battle it was Irish war cries that were on their lips.† Sir John Davies attributes this transformation to the desire of these lords to acquire wealth and power, which, especially by coyne and livery, they could do under Irish but not under English law, and this was no doubt a powerful operating cause, and quite in accordance with the traditional cupidity of their ancestors. But he ignores another cause which cannot be lost sight of and was potent in its effects—it is the attractive and absorbing power of the Irish themselves. The Irishman has been often sketched and often with no friendly hand. Rash in word, generous in deed, impulsive, warm-hearted, sympathetic, his scanty purse open to the needy, his cottage to the wanderer and the outcast, coveting no man's goods, recklessly prodigal of his own, brave in battle, chivalrous to a foe, faithful to a friend, with a fidelity which even death was powerless to conquer—such a character could not but win the esteem of the mail-clad warrior, who fought so often, both with and against him, and who had seen his qualities so often displayed. But when the hush of peace had succeeded to the clash of arms, when the lord had laid his battle harness aside and sat in the hall of his feudal castle, surrounded by his Irish friends—vassals and chiefs—the attractive influence of the Irish character was more potent still. He was charmed with the song and story in the musical Irish tongue ; the ready wit, the harmless repartee made the hours pass by upon rapid wings. And when the harper struck the chords of his harp with that skill for which the Irish harper was so famed, when he sang of war and battles and love, of soldier's bravery and chieftain's skill, when the notes that swelled loud

\* Gilbert's *Viceroys*, pp. 202-3.

† Kildare's war cry was "Crom aboo," from his castle at Croom. Desmond's was "Shannet aboo." Butler's was "Butler aboo."  
(Harris's *Ware*, Vol. II., p. 163.)

with victory again sank into a plaintive moan, as he sang a dirge for those who had fallen, and the eyes that brightened and flashed became dimmed with tears, then that alien lord, touched, softened, fascinated, even in spite of himself, was glad to call these people his countrymen, and proud if he could be called their chief. The conversion of many a stern warrior from English to Irish ways was due to such subtle influences as these.

The years that succeeded the death of Ufford were not particularly eventful, though there were disturbances and wars. O'Carroll was able to defeat the English (1346), and drove them all, or nearly all, out of Ely O'Carroll,\* the same year the Viceroy, Birmingham and the Earl of Kildare joined in making war on the O'Mores; the following year Nenagh was plundered by the Irish who in Leinster rose everywhere against the English; O'Mellaghlin was defeated by the English (1349); a few years later, the English of Dublin were defeated (1358), by the O'Mores with the loss of 240 men; and so weak had the English colony become that Black-rent, which already had been paid to MacMurrough, was now paid to one of the O'Tooles to defend the English possessions round Tallaght.† The evils caused by these wars must have been great nor must we forget the exactions of the officials,‡ who, to carry on the war, took the people's cattle, sheep and provisions, without even paying for them, all except the Viceroy, Rokeby, who declared that he would eat off wood and pay in gold.|| To add to all these evils there was bad weather, a mortality among animals, and worst of all, a terrible pestilence, which swept away so many persons that the land was left untilled.\*\* The pestilence reached its height in 1348, and in that year a monk at Kilkenny, seeing the dead around him on every side, and the living struck down so fast, in the midst of death and sickness and lamentation breathing an atmosphere tainted with pestilence, and wondering if even one of the human race would survive, sat down in his convent to tell and write what he saw. "That plague deprived villages and towns of every human inhabitant, so that scarcely one was left alive in them; those who touched the dead or dying immediately sickened, and the penitent and the confessor were carried together to the grave. Through fear and horror men hardly dared to perform the works of piety and mercy, to visit the sick and bury the dead. Many died from boils and abscesses and pustules in their shins or under their armpits, others died

\* Clynns's *Annals*.

† Grace's and Clynns's *Annals*. Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, pp: 204-206.

‡ Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 212.

|| Grace's *Annals*, p. 149.

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 143. Clynns's *Annals*.



from spitting of blood, and others from pain in the head were turned into madmen." \*

In 1355, the Earl of Desmond had grown to be such a favourite with Edward III., that he appointed him Viceroy for life, but this was not for long, for he died in the early part of the next year. His successors were Rokeby and St. Amand, then the Earl of Ormond (1359), and in the next year, the Earl of Kildare. But the English colony was shrinking in extent, day by day; the power of England in Ireland was small, and, extinguished in the other three provinces, in Leinster also it seemed doomed to speedy extinction.

\* Friar Clynn seems to have a presentiment that he, too, would fall a victim to the plague ("inter mortuos mortem expectans,") and if perchance anyone was left alive who might continue these Annals, he left some parchment for the purpose. It was not continued past the end of 1348, and the scribe adds that it appears the author died, as he expected. Clynn's words are worth giving. "Videns haec multa mala et mundum, totum quasi in maligno positum, inter mortuos mortem expectans donec veniat, sicut veraciter audiui et examinavi sic in scripturam redegei, et ne scriptura cum scriptore pereat et opus simul cum operario deficiat, dimitto pergamenam pro opere continuando, si forte in futuro homo superstes remaneat, an aliquis de genere Adae hanc pestilenciam possit evadere et opus continuare inceptam."

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### *The Statute of Kilkenny.*

The opportunity of Edward III to pacify Ireland allowed to pass—His son Lionel, Duke of Clarence, appointed Viceroy—His antipathy to the Irish—His arrival in Ireland—Operations in Leinster—Returns to England, but comes to Ireland a second time—Summoned a parliament—The Statute of Kilkenny—Its spirit—Its effect on the Irish and Anglo-Irish—Its penal provisions as to dress, language, priests and monks and bards—Some of its useful provisions.

THERE is a tide in the affairs of nations as of men which it is wisdom to take at the flood. These favourable moments occur but seldom, and if allowed to pass, so much the worse for the nation concerned, for they pass never to return. And in 1360 a favourable moment had arrived to bring the Irish of all classes together, to abolish strife and establish peace with one government and one system of law. A king sat on the English throne the lustre of whose achievements far outshone those of any king since the Conqueror. With Scotland he was at peace; the Treaty of Bretigny (1359)\* had enlarged his continental possessions as it had ended his war with France; and at home none of his nobles, nor any combination of them, would dare to measure swords with the hero who had humbled the chivalry of France, and had led into his capital a captive French king. Peace was everywhere, except in Ireland, and if Edward had turned his steps to that country at the head of those veterans whom he had so often led to victory, he would have found it easy to establish peace in Ireland, not that peace which would come from empty forms of submission, such as was tendered to Henry II. and John, given with reluctance and extorted by fear, but a peace founded on the recognition of ancient rights and which, established with just and equal laws, would be destined to endure. He had sometimes wished that the Irish would be admitted to the ranks of his subjects and be entitled, as such, to the protection of English law, but each time the Anglo-Irish lords stood in the

\* Hume's *History of England*:

way. But he could have now done what hitherto had not been done, for these lords were powerless to resist him. Their hatred and jealousy of one another was notorious ; they were not likely to combine for any purpose in rebellion against an English king, least of all against the hero of Crecy and Poitiers. Secured in the possession of the lands they held, admitted to the rights of English subjects, the native Irish would have hailed him as a deliverer, and not only in Leinster, but in the other provinces as well, they would have hastened to take advantage of his offer. A few chiefs here and there would, perhaps, have held aloof and talked much of their national independence, which their own folly and factious spirit had made it impossible to defend, but the greater number would have quietly, perhaps even gratefully, submitted. If Edward III. had done this, if he had deprived the Anglo-Irish lords of powers which they never should have got, and reduced them to the level of subjects, if he had suppressed tumults and established peace, if he had curbed the oppressor and thrown the shield of law and justice over the oppressed, his memory would be held in honour in Ireland ; and he would have earned a glory before which that of Crecy and Poitiers would have grown dim. But he did not realise the advantage of a contented Ireland, his ambition was for military glory ; Ireland, it was said, was a bad country to make war in, and instead of going there himself he sent his third son Lionel, Duke of Clarence, appointed him Viceroy, and gave him unlimited powers.

This young man was married to Elizabeth de Burgho, and it is thought that this fact explains much of his conduct in Ireland. His wife was a daughter of that Earl of Ulster who had been murdered in 1333. She was then but a year old and was taken to England, where she had since lived. Of her father's tragic death she was often reminded by her mother,\* who hated the Irish ; the mother's feelings were communicated to the daughter, who in turn inspired her husband with the same antipathy and hate.† Lionel landed at Dublin (1361) with an army of 1500 men—knights, esquires and archers on horseback, drawn from Lancashire, Staffordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire, in which commands were held by Lord Stafford, Sir John Carew, Sir William Windsor and the Earl of Ormond, Lionel himself being in supreme command.‡ Edward III. had declared that Ireland was almost lost, and placed much of the blame on the absentees who lived in England and took no measures to defend

\* It will be remembered she was married to Sir Ralph Ufford, one of the most unpopular of the Viceroys.

† The Duchess of Clarence died in Ireland (1362.)

‡ Davies' *Historical Tracts*, pp. 24-5. Grace's *Annals*, p. 153.



their lands in Ireland, and he demanded subsidies from them, which they gave, to the extent of two years revenue, out of their Irish lands.\* Lionel first marched against the O'Byrnes of Wicklow, and such was his distrust and even hatred of the Irish, that he issued a proclamation prohibiting anyone of Irish birth, whether of English descent or not, from coming near his army.† But the O'Byrnes came without asking his leave and, perhaps under cover of night, attacked and killed one hundred of the English.‡ Returning to Dublin, Lionel soon changed his quarters to Carlow, transferred the exchequer there and granted £500 to build a wall round the town. But though his army was large and well equipped and the whole revenue of the country was placed at his disposal, he was able to effect but little, and captured but a few places along the east coast of Ulster.¶ The O'Byrnes remained unpunished for the slaughter of one hundred English soldiers, the O'Connors of Connaught wasted the English possessions in Meath and King's County and burned the churches of Kilkenny (1362),\*\* and MacMurrough was so powerful that he drove the English baron, Carew, out of the district of Idrone (1366).†† One of the objects Lionel had in coming to Ireland was to recover his wife's estates in Ulster and Connaught, but this object he was unable to attain. The Burkes fought often among themselves and, especially in 1366, there were great dissensions among them,‡‡ and perhaps Lionel hoped much from these quarrels, but if so he hoped in vain, for the Burkes were quite ready to fight among themselves and equally ready to unite against him; and, piqued and crestfallen, he was unable to recover these lands which by right belonged to his wife and which had been usurped by her rebellious kindred. In this frame of mind he summoned a parliament at Kilkenny, and had enacted that well-known Statute about which so much has been written.

The Statute of Kilkenny has been praised by Davies who declares that it, coupled with the "*presence of the Lord Lionel,*" restored the English government among the English colonists, made a notable alteration in the state and manners of the people, and that this improvement lasted till the Wars of the Roses.||||

\* Grace's *Annals*, pp. 152-3.

† *Ibid.*

‡ Campion's *History of Ireland*: Campion says, no man "wisted" how it was done.

¶ Gilbert's *Viceroy's*, p. 220.

\*\* *Annals of Clonmacnoise*.

†† Dowling's *Annals*.

‡‡ *Four Masters. Statute of Kilkenny* (Hardiman's Introduction.)

|||| *Historical Tracts*, pp. 172-179. Davies was a good deal of a courtier, and seems to have thought that a prince, because he was a prince, was armed with a magician's wand.

But he gives no facts in support of this statement, nor could he, for the English colony did not get strong but weak, and the Statute of Kilkenny was not observed even by those for whom it was specially intended—the Irish of English descent. A truer description of the Statute is “that it was no more than a peevish and revengeful expression of the resentment Duke Lionel felt for the opposition he had met with and the loss of those lands he had come over to claim.”\* Clarence was disappointed and angry, he had not recovered his lands as he thought he would, he had met with more opposition from the native Irish than he expected, he was not enthusiastically supported by the Anglo-Irish, he was equally displeased with both, and had this Statute passed the object of which could be none other than to keep them in perpetual antagonism.

The Irish who lived in the provinces outside Leinster were not affected by this enactment; they did not feel its provisions nor recognise them; but the natives who lived in Leinster, in the districts where the English king's writ could be enforced—the Pale,† as it began soon to be called, and amid the English and Anglo-Irish who were subjects of England—on these the law was specially severe. They were not English subjects, they were not recognised as such in the Statute; and the spirit in which it regarded them is shown in the Preamble where they were spoken of as Irish *enemies*, and a lament is uttered that these Irish enemies are raised up and exalted “contrary to reason.” Parliamentary and royal sanction was thus given to the language and acts of the Anglo-Irish lords, who regarded the native Irish as enemies, mere Irish, whom it was no crime to kill, even in times of peace.‡ These natives lived among the English settlers; they had business and social relations with them; with some they were allied by ties of kindred, and when the English subject was prohibited from having any business transactions with them and punished if he had, both English colonist and Irish native were aggrieved. The practice had grown for the settlers to stand sponsors or gossips for the Irish children, to have their own children fostered or nursed among them, and intermarriages between the two races were common, but all these were specifically prohibited as crimes of the greatest magnitude, and the perpetrators of them pronounced to be traitors to “our lord the king.”

\* Hardiman's *Statute of Kilkenny* (Introduction), quotation from De Lolme.

† The term Pale was not used until late in the 14th century, the name used in English Acts of Parliament being March, or Border. (*Statute of Kilkenny*, Hardiman's Introduction.)

‡ Davies' *Historical Tracts*, pp. 83 *et seq.*

It was prohibited to allow the Irish to graze\* the lands of the settlers, it was prohibited to sell them either horses or armour in time of peace or victuals in time of war, a prohibition intelligible enough, for if the Irish adopted the use of armour, they would be a better match for their opponents and would suffer fewer defeats. In addition, the distinctive Irish dress†—the mantle, the *bared*, or cap, and the trowse—were interdicted under pain of forfeiting lands and tenements, if he had such, and liberty, if he had not. The same prohibition, with the same penalty attached, was directed against having an Irish name, riding without a saddle, as the Irish did, and speaking the Irish tongue. And the inhabitants of the Pale were prohibited from using “the plays which men call hurlings with great sticks and a ball upon the ground,” but were told instead to accustom themselves to draw the bow and throw the lance and such “gentlemanlike games.”‡ The bards and minstrels and story-tellers the English government held in special abhorrence. They seemed to regard them as spies who in the interest of their own countrymen, came among the English and Anglo-Irish to discover their intentions and their plans. The capacity of the Irish bards to lampoon was well known, so also was the skill of the harper; and the English feared the influence of these on their Anglo-Irish fellow-subjects and dreaded that their stories and their songs would seduce them from English and attract them to Irish ways. And to prevent this it was enacted that pipers, story-tellers, rhymers and other such should not come among the English, nor should the English receive them or make them gifts, and whoever did so should be attainted and imprisoned. Of all these enactments none was more vexatious than that prohibiting the Irish language, and this not only to the Irish living within the Pale but to many of English descent as well, who had lived so long in Ireland and mixed so much with the natives, that they knew the Irish language and knew no other tongue.

These legislators at Kilkenny had enlarged conceptions as to the limits of their powers, and not content with legislating on purely temporal matters, they passed into the regions of the

\* The term used by Davies for this grazing was *Creaght*, which was formerly applied to those who were shepherds in time of peace, and who drove away the prey in time of war. In Donegal they were armed with clubs and meadogs (knives). (Hardiman's notes, *Statute of Kilkenny*, pp: 41-43.)

† In the case of the poor the *mantle* was of frieze, in the upper classes it was of fine cloth, bordered with a woollen or silken fringe; the *bared* was probably of similar material, it was not a *hat* but a *cap*; the trowse was *breeches and stockings joined together* in one piece and was tight fitting. (Harris's *Ware*, Vol. II., pp. 174-178.)

‡ Chapter VI.



spiritual and stepped between the Creator and His creature. The proper ministers of the Gospel in the Pale were those who understood the people and whom the people could understand, and it ought to be a matter for the Church authority alone to say who these ministers were to be, and what their qualifications, and not for the Parliament, whose domain of activity belonged to the State and to affairs of State. Yet this parliament decreed that it was not allowable to confer a benefice on anyone who did not use the English tongue, nor could a native, unless he was of English descent, be admitted to any collegiate or cathedral church in the Pale by provision, collation or presentation of any person, nor to any benefice ; and if so admitted the appointment was cancelled and the place held void. Neither could any religious Order receive any "mere Irishman" into its community.\* To deprive the Irish-speaking people of ministers of the Gospel of their own race and tongue, whom alone they could understand was to starve their souls, and put obstacles before them on their road to Heaven ; and the strangest thing is that such legislation should be acquiesced in by three Archbishops and five bishops, and that they should even issue a sentence of excommunication against all those who should violate these penal decrees. How they reconciled this action with their duty it is difficult to see. Perhaps as churchmen they were of the character of that English cardinal who had to lament in his old age that he had been more faithful to his prince than to his God.†

But all the provisions of the Statute of Kilkenny were not of this penal character. They were restrictions of individual liberty, as all laws are, but some of them were obviously framed for the common good, and if enforced and obeyed the community would gain instead of suffer. In the very first chapter of the Statute it was laid down that the rights and privileges and immunities of the Church were to be faithfully maintained, tithes were to be paid, and with their levying or collection no layman was to interfere. Whoever it excommunicated was to be shunned by all, and the civil power was to co-operate in enforcing its decrees. Treaties and agreements between English subjects were to be faithfully observed, and, if broken, the offender

\* Hardiman (*Statute of Kilkenny*, p. 46), has justly stigmatised this enactment as the most severe of all. It could not, however, be carried out, for there was soon a scarcity of clergy within the Pale, and Irish priests had to be admitted.

† Their names indicate that, for the most part, they were English—Minot, John of Oxford, Young, Le Reve, De Swafham, but better might be expected from O'Carroll (Cashel), O'Connor (Killaloe) and O'Grady (Tuam)—these are Irish names. (Ware's *Bishops*.)

was liable to forfeiture of liberty and lands. Nor were malefactors to be harboured under a similar penalty, and if anyone were to enfeoff another with his lands, so that he might escape his legal obligations, or, perhaps, commit a crime with impunity, the enfeoffment in such cases was not to stand and the law was to be enforced and the lands attempted to be thus rendered free from liability were to be seized and, if necessary, confiscated. Against grasping and corrupt officials there was a special enactment and neither a magistrate could receive bribes from a litigant, nor could a warden or constable extort money from his prisoner. Nor were there any more salutary enactments than those which had reference to the great lords and tended to put limits to their turbulence and rapacity. They were not to keep kerns or hoblers\* for the purpose of preying upon the King's subjects, though they might have some within their own territory, and for the purpose of guarding and defending it. But if any of these kerns or hoblers took from the King's subjects victuals, or any other goods, the hue and cry was to be raised after them and they were to be treated by all as common robbers to be attacked and resisted by all, and, if they effected their escape, their lord was to be held accountable and might be put in judgment of life and members, and his lands forfeited.

One of the most fruitful sources of strife was the power exercised by these nobles to make peace or war as they pleased, a power which never seems to have been founded on any legal right and was now taken away. Henceforth there was to be one peace and one war, nor was war ever to be declared except after consultation between the king and Parliament and then the war was to be continued against the Irish, until they were "finally destroyed."† To obtain supplies for such wars there were to be four "wardens of the peace" appointed in each county, who were to assess the amount of subsidy each individual subject was to give and to review the men-at-arms, hoblers and footmen, who were to be enrolled. Finally, these nobles were to be answerable for their own retainers to this extent that if they were notified of any crimes committed by them, they were bound to have them arrested and lodged in the next jail and, failing to do this after due notice being given them, the lord was to be assessed himself and made amenable for whatever crime, or crimes, his retainer had committed.

Such was the Statute of Kilkenny, made up of some useful, but of many mischievous provisions. Conceived in hatred, the outcome of failure and disappointment, it sought to bring together

\* The *hoblers* were light-armed cavalry. Kerns were infantry.

† Chapter X.

English and Anglo-Irish, to the exclusion of the native Irish, and to have the Anglo-Irish and the native Irish in perpetual conflict. But it was barren of useful results and its provisions were not, indeed could not be, fully enforced. Within a short time it was necessary to allow priests who spoke Irish into the Pale, to minister to the Irish-speaking people there; there were still intermarriages between the Irish and Anglo-Irish; and within twenty years it was necessary to dispense the Earl of Desmond from one of its provisions, for he had sent his son to be fostered at the palace of O'Brien of Thomond.\*

\* This dispensation was given by Richard II., and bears date, 8th December, 1388.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

### *A Heroic Leinster Chief.*

The native Irish, the Anglo-Irish, and the English king—Effects of the Statute of Kilkenny—The Earl of Desmond defeated by O'Brien and O'Connor—Condition of Thomond and of Connaught—O'Connor Don and O'Connor Roe—O'Connor Don submits to Richard II.—Continued strife in Connaught—Condition of Ulster—English power outside Leinster and Meath—The Pale—The MacMurroghs—Art MacMurrough the Elder, Art the Younger—Feeble condition of the English colony—Richard II comes to Ireland—Submission of the Irish Chiefs—Their reception at Dublin—Mortimer and Art MacMurrough—Battle of Kells—King Richard's second expedition—Battle of Callan, and of Kilmainham—State of the Pale—Art Mac Murrough's last years and death.

SINCE the days of Strongbow the scourge of the native Irish was the rapacity and insolence of the Anglo-Irish lords. They seized their lands, they hunted them into bogs and mountains, they harassed them with continued war, they denied them justice or law, and in every case frustrated the designs of the English government to admit them to the status of English subjects. These lords acted ostensibly in the interests of England but in reality in their own interest; much of what they did was unknown in England, and much of what they did when it was known was condemned.\* And the Irish, or at least some of them, entertained the belief that if the English king knew the exact state of things in Ireland, he would restrain these lords from perpetrating so much injustice and would protect the native Irish from their rapacity. To such as these the Statute of Kilkenny, and the circumstances in which it was passed into law, must have come as a painful surprise. For the parliament of Kilkenny was called together by the son of Edward III., acting in his father's name and armed with his father's power, and its enactments were stamped with his approval. And even the

\* This was so in the case of De Burgho, condemned by Henry III. (1241)

blindest could not but see that towards the native Irish the spirit of that famous Statute was one of hatred and contempt. When they were described by an Act of Parliament as aliens and enemies, outcasts in their own land with whom it was high treason even to associate, it was time for the Irish chiefs to take alarm and to lay aside their mutual rivalries and jealousies, that is, if they wished to save themselves and their people from extermination. And it was no doubt the recognition of mutual and impending danger that brought O'Connor of Connaught and O'Brien of Thomond together. Against their united forces the Earl of Desmond marched (1370), but on the banks of the river Mague, in Limerick, he was defeated with heavy loss, many of his followers were slain, and himself was taken prisoner.\* The conquerors marched on Limerick and that city, so long the stronghold of English power in that quarter, fell into their hands. MacNamara was appointed Warden of the city but someone acting in the English interest treacherously murdered him† and the city soon reverted to the English.

Such rapid and decisive success should have urged the Irish to continue united, and they might have defeated Ormond as easily as they had defeated Desmond. But these alliances were as quickly dissolved as they were formed; they were ever lacking in permanence or cohesion; O'Connor went back to Connaught, nor do we find these two chiefs again acting in concert. And one of the MacNamaras deserted the O'Briens, became the King's liege subject, and was paid to make war on his countrymen.‡ The power of Thomond was further weakened by quarrels among the O'Briens themselves, for there were two rivals for the headship of the province, and their strife was long and bitter. The cause of one of them—Turlogh—was espoused by the Burkes of Connaught, who marched with an army into Thomond and compelled Brian O'Brien, who had attained to temporary pre-eminence, to fly from the province. But these same Burkes were soon defeated by the MacNamaras, whose territory they had invaded, and who, almost unaided, were strong enough to drive them back. This victory caused Burke's nominee to lose the headship of Thomond. His rival, Brian, who was married to MacNamara's daughter, made peace with Burke and gave him his daughter in marriage and, strengthened by these alliances, assumed the reins of power. And a few years later (1380), with Burke as his ally, he compelled some of the Munster English to

\* Grace's *Annals*. Leland, Vol. I., pp. 323-4. He erroneously places the battle field in Mayo (at the Monastery).

† *Annals of the Four Masters*.

‡ Grace's *Annals*, pp. 155-6. He had an order for 50 marks, May 7th, 1374:

pay him tribute.\* For years there was peace in Thomond. The O'Briens ceased quarrelling; the Burkes were their allies; and Desmond was on such friendly terms that one of his sons was fostered at O'Brien's palace. Once, (in 1409), there was a quarrel between two rivals for the chieftaincy; † Connor O'Brien was dethroned and had to fly to Connaught, but next year he returned and was strong enough to recover his inheritance, and for the remainder of his reign of nearly twenty years there was peace in Thomond.

During these years the state of Connaught was deplorable. Of the royal race of O'Connor there were still many members, and this is the same as to say there was still constant strife. No two members of the family could agree, or, if they did for the moment agree, it was probably to make war upon another of their race and name. Active, energetic, sometimes with military capacity, always brave, they wasted their energies and squandered their talents in fratricidal contests. The patrimony of their house was diminished in extent, its substance was in alien hands, only the shadow of what it was remained, but over the shadow the quarrels and contests were without number and without end. The lessons of history, the memory of what they were and of what they had lost, the happiness of their own people, the miseries they had so often endured by war—these things appealed to them in vain. They would establish no law, they would recognise no rule which could regulate a peaceful and orderly succession to the headship of their clan; and if such a law was ever established it was quickly broken through. Each prince felt that he, and none other, was qualified to be chief, and he would submit to another only as long as he was powerless to resist. The claims of age, the binding force of family compacts he despised, acknowledged no supremacy except that of superior force; and as soon as he could get together sufficient followers to assert himself, he was prepared to attack the ruling chief and hurl him from the seat of power; and he was prepared to accept any aid and to enter into any arrangement, however base. The hardships endured by his own clansmen gave him no trouble, he wasted their lives and destroyed their property without compunction, for he knew nothing of that patriotism which involves the effacement of self, and is more concerned for the advancement of the common good. It is, indeed, true that other provinces of Ireland suffered much from the rivalries and jealousies of their chiefs, but in none of them, filled with tumults as they were, can a parallel be found for Connaught, cursed for centuries by these contests of the O'Connors.

\* White's *History of Clare*, pp. 143-6.

† *Four Masters*.



Into these contests the other chiefs of Connaught—the MacDermotts, the Burkes and others were drawn, and the chronicles of the period can repeat, year after year, with monotonous iteration, that there were wars in Connaught. On the death of Hugh O'Connor (1368), there was the usual turmoil, and instead of the new chief Roderick continuing to support and follow up the advantage gained by the defeat of the Earl of Desmond, he was more concerned to wreak vengeance on a member of his own family. By treachery he captured Tieve O'Connor and gave him over to Donal O'Connor of Sligo, and the unfortunate prisoner was instantly put to death.\* A little later (1375), Roderick O'Connor was at war with O'Kelly of Hy-many, but this time he was blameless, for O'Kelly was aided by the Burkes, and O'Connor was acting in his own defence. Two years later the same coalition attacked him, but again Roderick was successful, and at Roscommon his assailants were overthrown, both the O'Kellys and the Burkes losing many of their chiefs.† That same year some quarrel arose between O'Connor and MacDermott, O'Connor entered Moylurg, wasted and spoiled it, killed some of the inhabitants, burned their buildings, destroyed their corn and carried off their cattle, and when he had thus satisfied his appetite for war, he made peace with MacDermott and even compensated him for the injuries done him.‡ Perhaps it was easy to satisfy the demands of the chief but it could not be easy to compensate the unfortunate people, whose breadwinners had been slaughtered and whose homes and fields had been laid waste.

At the death of Roderick (1384), another war of succession arose between two members of the O'Connor family, each named Turlogh. Each was powerful and persistent, each had allies ;|| and the prospect seemed to be a war, long, bitter, and indecisive, in which the unfortunate province was to be still further wasted and destroyed. A conference was arranged and, after much deliberation, it was agreed by the contending parties, and by their allies on each side, that the inheritance of the O'Connors was to be divided. Turlogh Roe, or the Red, was to be head of the O'Connors of Sligo, while his rival, Turlogh Don, or the Brown, was to be head of the O'Connors of Roscommon. This arrangement abolished for ever the old system of one King of Connaught, as head and Chief of all the O'Connors of the

\* *O'Connors of Connaught*, p. 149. It is not said what crime he had committed—perhaps that of aspiring to be chief.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Annals of Clonmacnoise*.

|| *O'Connors*, p. 150. On one side were the O'Kellys, Burkes and MacDonoghs, on the other the MacDermotts.

province, but in the circumstances it seemed the best to be done, and it was hoped that each, satisfied with the possessions he had got, would keep the peace. The hope was vain. Both were dissatisfied, each thought he should be supreme; and to sustain his pretensions had recourse to arms, with the result that it is written in the *Annals* for 1384, that there was universal war in Connaught.\* The same entry could be made in many succeeding years, for the wars between O'Connor Don and O'Connor Roe were of yearly occurrence. They ceased from war when their strength was exhausted, they resumed hostilities when their strength had been renewed, and in 1392-6-7 and -8† there was war between them, until finally (1406), O'Connor Don was treacherously inveigled into the house of one of the Burkes, the ally and confederate of O'Connor Roe, and there he was put to death by his rival.‡ In the meantime that same O'Connor Don, in the hope of humiliating his rival and obtaining English aid for that purpose, had gone to Waterford (1395), and made his submission to Richard II. In the church of the Friars Minors in that city, Turlogh, Burke and Birmingham went through the form of submission; and Turlogh, "removing his mantle, hood, girdle and dagger, on bended knees at the feet of the King, promised to be faithful to the English king, to attend his Parliament, to do what a good and faithful liegeman ought and is bound to do to his natural liege lord." Then he kissed the Gospels and took the oath, and he and Burke and Birmingham were soon created knights on board the ship *Trinity*, in the port of Waterford, where golden spurs were put on their heels and a sword given them by Richard to be honestly used.||

The murder of O'Connor Don did not end the war between the two branches of the O'Connor family. His successor, Cahal, sought and obtained the aid of MacWilliam Burke, O'Connor Roe had the aid of MacDermott, and for years a desultory war, ruinous to the people, but indecisive in its results, was carried on, and this at a time when unity and combination among the O'Connors would have effected much, not only for Connaught, but for Ireland. Concurrently with these wars between the O'Connors, there were other quarrels and wars between the other Connaught chiefs. The O'Rorkes and O'Reillys were at war (1390), so also were the MacRannells and O'Rorkes in the same year, the MacDermotts were quarrelling among themselves

\* *Annals of Loch Ce. Four Masters.*

† *Four Masters.*

‡ *O'Connors*, p. 156.

|| *O'Connors of Connaught*, pp. 154-6. O'Connor Don on this occasion claimed to have power to act for a great many of the Connaught chiefs—MacDonagh, O'Dowd, O'Hara, O'Gara, MacDermott, O'Rorke and others.

(1393),\* and in these contests the other chiefs were generally engaged, on one side or the other—the O'Kellys of Hy-many, the MacDonoghs of Tirerill and the Burkes—all of whom made war with little justification and insufficient cause, made treaties and broke them, and changed sides according as they were swayed by passion or caprice. What the province suffered during these years we can judge from an entry in the *Annals of Loch Cé* (1398), where it is stated that Burke and O'Connor Roe entered Tirerill with their forces and that "the entire country was destroyed by them, both grass and corn, lake (the islands and buildings of the lakes) and church, forts, fastnesses and strong-holds."

While Connaught was thus desolated every year by the contests of factious chiefs, the state of Ulster was one of comparative calm, for though Tirconnell and Tirowen sometimes quarrelled, yet there were sometimes intervals, and long intervals, of peace. In neither province was the succession fixed, and this sometimes led to quarrels, but when a chief had asserted his right to rule, he was left undisturbed within his own territory, by his own people, except in rare cases, and only at his death was there a renewal of the combat. There was a war of succession among the O'Donnells (1380); the same year O'Donnell was defeated by O'Neill, and, taking advantage of their quarrels, the Viceroy, Mortimer, entered Ulster, penetrated into Tirowen and Tirconnell and destroyed the fortress of Castlefin, in Donegal, and another fortress in Tirowen.† But the effect of his raid was not permanent, nor did it teach a lesson either to O'Neill or O'Donnell, for at intervals the combat was renewed between them. In 1395, O'Donnell made war on O'Neill and defeated him; two years later, that same vigorous chief ransacked and plundered the buildings on the islands of Lough Erne and wasted the district of Carbury, in Sligo; the next year (1398), he was again at war with O'Neill; two years subsequently O'Neill invaded Tirconnell and destroyed much of the corn there, and, perhaps in retaliation, the war was resumed in the following year.‡ But during these years the power of O'Neill had grown and instead of directing his whole energies to the subjugation of O'Donnell which, with a prince of so much energy, was no easy matter, he turned his attention to the remaining English settlers in Ulster, defeated those of Down, crushed the Savages and their allies in the south of Antrim,|| (1383), and burned the

\* *Annals of Loch Cé.*

† *Four Masters. Annals of Clonmacnoise.* Gilbert's *Viceroy's*, p. 245.

‡ *Four Masters* at these dates.

|| Hugh O'Neill and Ravelin Savage met in a charge of cavalry and killed each other. (*Four Masters.*)



fortress of Carrickfergus, defeated the English of Dundalk (1392), and wrung submission and tribute from that city. He had meanwhile asserted his superiority over the Irish chiefs of the province and, in 1398, with the exception of Tirconnell, all Ulster, both Irish and English, were compelled to acknowledge him as their chief.\*

At the opening of the fifteenth century, English power, outside of Leinster and Meath, had almost ceased to exist. After his submission to Richard II. at Waterford, Burke had been appointed Lord Deputy of Connaught,† but it would be hard to recognise an English subject in the new official, for he spoke Irish and no other tongue; and when he made his submission to Richard an interpreter had to be employed.‡ In defiance of the Statute of Kilkenny he had intermarried with the Irish, joined in their quarrels and made war on them and on members of his own family, without any authority from England. Nor did he, after his appointment as Lord Deputy (1403), re-establish English influence in Connaught, for it is probable that had he tried he would be unable, and there is no evidence that he even tried. In the South the Earl of Desmond, after his defeat in 1370, remained in salutary dread of the O'Briens, and did not again measure swords with them. Neither did he take advantage of the occasional quarrels between his neighbours—the MacCarthys in the east, or the Sullivans in the south—and when he died (1399), it was with the reputation of being a scholar and a poet, rather than a warrior or statesman.¶ And his successor, far from quarrelling with the Irish chiefs, quarrelled only with the Earl of Ormond; and it was after making a raid into his territory that he was drowned (1400), while crossing the river Suir.\*\* It was Leinster that became the centre of historical interest during these years. Even there English power was on the wane; the district where the King's writ held good—the Pale with its shifting boundaries and varying extent—was gradually being contracted in its limits; and in the very midst of the province an Irish chieftain had arisen, whose patience and perseverance and military skill recall the memory of Brian Boru, a chieftain against whom the whole forces of England had been repeatedly hurled and as often flung backward in defeat. This chieftain's name was Art MacMurrough.

\* *Four Masters.*

† Hardiman's *History of Galway*, p. 63. He was appointed on the 5th December, 1403, at the fee of 80 marks

‡ *O'Conors of Connaught*, pp. 155-6. The interpreter was the Earl of Ormond, who knew both Irish and English or rather Norman-French

¶ *Annals of Clonmacnoise. Four Masters.*

\*\* Meehan's *History of the Geraldines*, p. 41.

When Dermot MacMurrogh died (1171), he left no legitimate male descendant, and his castles and lands and, as far as he could, his authority over Leinster he bequeathed to his daughter, Eva, and her husband, Strongbow. But a female ruler was unknown among the Irish chiefs; the Leinster clans were not disposed to acknowledge the supremacy of Dermot's daughter, still less that of her husband, a foreign noble, who had made war upon them and robbed many of them of their possessions, and, instead, they set up as King of Leinster an illegitimate son of the late king. This prince was named Donal, and from being fostered at Kilcavan, near Gorey, in Wexford, he was called Donal Kavanagh. His talents were considerable, and his physical endowments were such that he was called Donal the Handsome. Attracted by these qualities of mind and body, his illegitimacy was forgotten, and he was raised by the native chiefs to the position of King of Leinster. He was amongst those who submitted to Henry II. and (in 1175) he was killed in battle with the O'Nolans. In his family the dignity of King of Leinster was maintained, but those kings for over a century disappear from history, and it is not until 1283, that we hear of a Murtogh MacMurrogh and his son Art, who lost their heads at Arklow. A little later, another of these princes displayed his standard within sight of Dublin, but was defeated by Butler (1316), and a few years subsequent to this date (1327), Donal Mac Art MacMurrogh was taken prisoner by the English and confined in Dublin Castle, from which, by the aid of Adam Nangle, he soon escaped. Embittered by his imprisonment, he made ceaseless and not unsuccessful war upon the English colonists, and in a few years he had conquered almost all Carlow and Wexford, and so dreaded was his successor Maurice, and so powerful, that the English government paid him eighty marks a year (1335), not to molest their possessions\* and willingly recognised him as The MacMurrogh, that is, as the lawful chief of the Leinster Irish. The rightful successor of Maurice was Dermot MacMurrogh, but he was taken prisoner by the English and kept in confinement till his death (1369), and, in consequence, Art MacMurrogh became King of Leinster, and in time became recognised by the English as The MacMurrogh, and like his predecessor was paid the usual stipend of eighty marks a year. But the good relations between Art and the English did not last; some cause of quarrel arose between them and he was proclaimed

\* *Memoir of Art MacMurrogh*, by Thomas D'Arcy Magee, pp. 1-6:

This is one of the earliest, if not quite the earliest, instances of these payments, which afterwards became so common as *Black Rent*—given to keep the Irish chiefs *quiet*, not by way of *pension*, as has been sometimes contended.

a traitor (1358), at an English parliament held at Castledermot, and great preparations were made to crush him.\* In the war that followed it was not the Irish chief who was defeated but his opponents, nor did the Duke of Clarence fare any better a few years later. He defeated the Viceroy, De Windsor, 1369, and about the same time seized upon the lands and castles of Carew in Idrone and continued to hold them in spite of the English. So feeble had the colonists become, that the barrier of the Pale was removed from Carlow to Dublin† (1373); the government, unable to communicate with Wicklow by land had to send supplies by sea, the O'Briens had risen in Limerick, the Clan Gibbon and Roches assailed Youghal, Kildare's town of Adare was sacked and burned, the Treasury was exhausted,‡ the Viceroy was unable to pay his troops and levied forced subsidies on the Colonists; and when De Windsor returned to England after his second term of the Viceroyalty (1376), and after many years spent in Ireland and many wars with the natives, he had to declare that he could never pass beyond the borders sufficiently far to learn the nature of the interior of the country, or the condition of the natives.¶ When Art died, 1377, it was with the reputation of being the greatest of his race, but his son, also named Art, who succeeded, was destined to be greater still. He was then but twenty years old, active, hardy, vigorous, a daring rider, dexterous in the use of the lance and already of proved military capacity, for he had won fame in his father's wars. From the government at Dublin he received his yearly stipend of eighty marks, but he had married an Anglo-Irish wife, Eliza le Veele, Baroness of the Norragh, her lands in Kildare were sought to be confiscated by the Crown, because as an English subject she had violated the Statute of Kilkenny and this led Art to retaliate by making war on the English.\*\* The O'Byrnes, O'Tooles, O'Nolans and O'Dempseys, enthusiastically supported him, the colonists were everywhere overborne and by the year 1389, the limits of the Pale did not reach on the south, beyond Bray, nor on the north, beyond Drogheda.‡‡ Whether in war

\* Magee's *Art MacMurrough*, pp. 6-7. Grace's *Annals*, pp. 149-151, notes.

† *Ibid.*, p. 10.

‡ When Murrough O'Brien of Thomond attacked the Leinster Colonists (1377), he was bought off with the payment of 100 marks, but only 9 marks remained in the Treasury; the remainder had to be got by borrowing—from the Prior of the Hospitallers 16 marks, from Fitzwilliam a horse, value 20 marks, from FitzGerald a horse, 20 marks, from Lord de Burgh a horse, 20 marks, from John More a BED, value 30 shillings. (Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 243.)

¶ Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, pp. 240-1.

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 266.

‡‡ Magee's *Art MacMurrough*, pp. 14-15.



or diplomacy, Art had shown himself the superior of every English Viceroy with whom, in one capacity or other, he had to deal.

Richard II. was then King of England, and great was his annoyance at the continued success of Art MacMurrough; and when he laid claim to the imperial crown of Germany, by virtue of his marriage with Anne of Bohemia, he was derisively told by his rivals to go back and conquer Ireland before he could wear an imperial crown.\* Mortified at these taunts, he determined to go to Ireland himself and crush this audacious Leinster chief, and in October, 1394, with 4,000 men-at-arms and 30,000 archers, he cast anchor at Waterford. He was accompanied by his uncle, the Earl of Gloucester, by Roger Mortimer, Earl of March, Mowbray, Earl of Nottingham and by many other English nobles and ecclesiastics. With such an army he concluded he would have little trouble in vanquishing the King of Leinster, and after a few days rest at Waterford, he marched north, intending probably to make his first stay at New Ross, and from this as his headquarters to waste MacMurrough's territory, and bring that chieftain as a suppliant to his feet. But he overrated his own strength as he underrated the resource and skill of his opponent, and the difficulties of the country through which he had to pass. Art received early intelligence of his designs and with his army swooped down on New Ross, burst open its gates, plundered its inhabitants, carried off everything which was useful for himself and his army; and when Richard reached the town, he found it a mass of ruins, without food to supply his army or houses to shelter them, or fortified walls behind which they might repose in peace. Nor was this all. On their march to Kilkenny, whither the English bent their steps, they were ceaselessly harassed by MacMurrough. His army was much inferior to the enemy in numbers, but they knew the country well—its rivers and valleys and woods—they led the English into ambuscades, they cut down straggling parties, they harassed them by night attacks; and when Richard arrived at Kilkenny, his army was thinned in numbers and depressed in spirits, and had lost much of the vigour and confidence with which they were animated, when they landed at Waterford from their ships.† But the King was still confident of success, and, in the arrogance of

\* Leland's *History*, Vol. 1., pp. 339–40. Lingard assigns the reason as a wish to divert his melancholy, because of the death of Anne (Vol. III., p. 174). Perhaps both reasons were combined.

† *Four Masters*. Magee, pp. 20–25. *Chronicles of Froissart* (Globe Ed.), p. 430.

superior numbers, he haughtily announced to Art MacMurrough and the other Leinster chiefs, if they would surrender all the castles and lands which they then held, he would graciously allow them to hold in peace all the lands which they could conquer from the other Irish enemies of England. Those terms were necessarily rejected.\* Deeply mortified, Richard pursued his journey northwards; the Leinstermen continued their guerilla tactics, cut off isolated parties of the English, lowered their numbers and their spirits, until at length even Richard's pride was humbled and he was compelled to send a further message to Art, requesting an interview at Dublin. This proposal was accepted † and Richard continuing his journey, arrived at Dublin, where a palace was set up for his accommodation at Hoggin Green, and where, amid revelry and feasting and pageantry, he spent the Christmas of that year. On the 16th of February following, a further conference took place at Ballygory, between Leighlinbridge and Carlow, between Art MacMurrough and Mowbray, Earl of Nottingham, acting on the part of King Richard. Art, mounted on a black steed, was accompanied by O'Byrne, O'Nolan, Malachy O'Murrough, and Rory O'More, who came, like himself, to make their submission. And Art, taking off his girdle, sword and cap, and placing his hands between those of Nottingham, who gave him the kiss of peace on behalf of Richard II., vowed allegiance but only on condition that his wife's lands were restored to him, that his annuity was regularly paid, and that for the lands he surrendered in Carlow other lands would be given in exchange.‡

Perhaps Richard II. expected that the various chiefs would flock to Dublin to tender their submission, as in former days their ancestors had done to Henry II. They made no sign in this direction, but a message came from the northern chiefs that they would meet him at Drogheda, and so anxious was Richard to facilitate them that he proceeded there and received the submission of O'Neill, O'Donnell, O'Reilly, O'Hanlon and MacMahon. Those chiefs were received well and accompanied the King back to Dublin, where O'Brien, O'Connor and

\* Cox (*Hibernia Anglicana*, pp. 138-9), says these terms were accepted by Art and five other Leinster chiefs, but this is inherently improbable, for Art had behind him 20 years of successful war, the other chiefs supported him, and in the Wicklow mountains he could defy all attack. In these circumstances he was not likely to surrender everything he had, and get what amounted to nothing in exchange.

† *Four Masters*. "He went into the King's house at the solicitation of the Irish and English of Leinster."

‡ Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, pp. 270-1. These terms, it will be seen, are very different from those given by Cox.

MacMorrough awaited them, where the feastings were renewed and where these Irish chiefs, not without reluctance, consented to receive knighthood, according to the English fashion. Unlike the courtiers of King John on a former occasion, the ministers and courtiers of King Richard showed every attention to the Irish chiefs, and were careful not to ridicule their appearance or habits. The four principal chiefs—O'Neill, O'Brien of Thomond, MacMurrough and O'Connor, "King of Connor and Erpe"—were lodged in "a fair house" in Dublin, and a certain Henry Cristede, an Englishman, was appointed their attendant and interpreter.\* He had been taken prisoner by the Irish thirty years before, he had lived among them for seven years, had married an Irish wife, and one of his daughters had married an Irishman, and he could speak the Irish language well and had it taught to his children.† He was more than usually garrulous and had much to tell his friend, Sir John Froissart, of these Irish chiefs and of his own troubles with them. They would sit at the same table with their minstrels and servants, eat out of the same dish and drink out of the same cup; they would ride without saddles, and they preferred their mantles to wearing a silk gown. And Cristede told his friend how much he prevailed with them. He put the four kings at one table, the minstrels at a lower table and the servants at a lower table still; he induced them to ride with saddles in the English fashion, and to exchange their mantles for gowns of silk, lined with minever and gray, and he got breeches of linen cloth for them instead of their tight fitting trowse.‡ In the midst of the fetes and pageantry at Dublin news came from England, that the Lollards were growing troublesome, that the country was already in a ferment; and Richard II., leaving Roger Mortimer, Viceroy, in July, 1395, returned to England.

The new Viceroy was, as the grandson of the Duke of Clarence, the next heir to the throne of England, and if he was merely an Irish chief, he might also claim the throne of Ireland, for

\* *Froissart*, pp. 432-3.

† Cristede was a soldier with the Earl of Ormond and rode one of his horses, which bolted into the Irish ranks. An Irishman jumped up behind the rider and brought horse and man to a town called Herpelipin, and this Irishman—by name Brin Costeret—was taken prisoner, seven years later, by the English, and riding the same horse which Cristede formerly rode. In the meantime, the Englishman had married Brin's daughter, and when he was exchanged for his father-in-law and went to live at Bristol, he left one of his daughters in Ireland, who in time married an Irishman.

‡ Cristede's opinion of the Irish was not high. He seems to have wondered that the four Kings believed in God and the Trinity and acknowledged the supremacy of the Pope. (p. 433.)



he was descended from her ancient kings. By his descent from the Earl of Ulster and the De Genevilles of Meath, one of his ancestors was Roderick O'Connor, the last Ardri, whose daughter had married Hugh de Lacy, while on the other hand he claimed direct descent from Eva, wife of Srrongbow, and daughter of Dermot MacMurrough. Attachment to an ancient name has always been a strong feature of the Irish character, but Mortimer was England's Viceroy, acting in England's name and for the extension of her power, and as such could not, and did not, receive the allegiance of the Irish chiefs. Young and inexperienced, either in diplomacy or war, he had to rely on his advisers at Dublin; and the advice they gave him was to get Art MacMurrough by treachery into his power.\* He was invited to a banquet and sought to be kept, but he was in some way forewarned and managed to escape.† Such treachery as this roused the anger of Art and his chiefs, and a desultory war was carried on for some time, in which the Irish seemed to have fared better than their foes, for the O'Tooles defeated the English (1396),‡ with the loss of 120, and Art himself captured the castle of Carton in the following year. To avenge these disasters, as well as to signalise his viceroyalty by some notable achievement, Mortimer collected all his forces (1398), and marched south to encounter Art and to chastise him. The opposing forces met at Kenlis, or Kells, in Kilkenny, and Mortimer was defeated and slain. || Concurrently with these events other disasters befell the English. Mageoghegan of Westmeath killed the English chief, Maurice D'Alton; the Earl of Kildare was taken prisoner by O'Connor of Offaly; and the Earl of Desmond died.\*\* The Irish were everywhere triumphant and elated, the English dispirited, English power seemed tottering to its fall, and the danger seemed imminent that, outside of Dublin and Waterford, the flag of England would cease to float.

When news of these disasters arrived from Ireland, Richard II. was involved in many difficulties. Harassed by turbulent nobles and ambitious relatives, he had for the moment triumphed over both, and in revenge had embarked on a policy of persecution and proscription, which roused the ire of his subjects, and finally

\* Magee, pp. 38-43.

† *Four Masters*, 1395.

‡ *Ibid.*

|| Ware's *Annals*: Magee (pp. 47-48), puts Art in this battle—the Annalists do not, it was only the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles—but Magee's reasons are strong.

\*\* Magee, p. 50.

lost him his crown.\* Surrounded by so many difficulties, menaced by so many enemies, he could ill afford to leave England and proceed to Ireland; but, unmindful of former failures, he was still ambitious of military renown, and desired to avenge the death of Mortimer and humble that proud Leinster chief, whose skill and daring had so often triumphed over English arms. With an army of at least 20,000 men, he sailed from Milford Haven and arrived at Waterford, on the first of June, 1399.† As on a former occasion he marched from Waterford to Kilkenny. He could easily have crushed Art MacMurrough, if that chief had met him in the open field and risked all on a single battle, for the weight of numbers was on the English side. But Art was too experienced to risk defeat, and fell back, first to Carlow, and then eastwards to Wicklow. He had but 3000 men, though they were stout men, such as the Englishmen marvelled to behold. His usual guerilla tactics were pursued. The women and children he sent to a place of safety in the hills or woods, while his army harassed the advancing English, cut off their scouts and foragers, made night attacks on their camp, carried off all provisions, leaving the enemy to march through a district, broken, boggy and wooded, where they could get nothing for their horses but a little green oats, and where their horses sank to their saddle-girths in the marshes. Their provisions ran short, the horses died of hunger and exposure to rain and wind, a biscuit in one day was thought a good allowance for five men many were for days without any food at all; and the Frenchman, who wrote the narrative of the expedition and accompanied the army heartily wished he was back again in Paris even without one penny in his pocket. Many died from sickness, many more from hunger; mourning, depression and gloom replaced the gaiety of their first march from Waterford to Kilkenny; the minstrels ceased to amuse; and if they played, their notes were those of woe; and instead of a conquering army they were a feeble, famine-stricken multitude, hastening to Dublin to get food.

At Kilkenny news was brought that a French knight, D'Artois, had defeated a body of Irish at Kildare, and killed 200 of them, and, elated by this victory, Richard sent a message to Art MacMurrough calling on him to submit but the answer came back, that he [(Art), "would not submit, that he was

\* Lingard, Vol. III., p. 189.

† Harris's *Hibernica*, pp. 49-58. The narrative of the expedition was written (in French), by a Frenchman (Creton), who accompanied the expedition. It was translated by Lord Totnes into English, and is the second of the Tracts included in the *Hibernica*.

the rightful King of Leinster and would never cease from war and the defence of his country until his death, and that the wish to deprive him of it by conquest was unlawful."\* But an uncle of Art—Malachy MacMurrough—came to the English camp, barefooted and bareheaded, and with a halter round his neck, and in this humble fashion made submission. He was pardoned all he had done against the English and was required only to be faithful for the time to come.† Still hoping that Art would yield, Richard II. sent him a second messenger, promising that if he would come and submit as his uncle had done, he would receive mercy and pardon and be endowed with castles and lands. But Art's answer was that he would do no such thing, that for all the gold in the world he would not submit but would continue to war upon the King of England.‡ Decimated by disease and hunger, word had been sent to Dublin for food; that city sent supplies by sea; and the army hastened eastwards to Arklow, where the ships put in, laden with food. And the starving soldiers rushed into the waves, forcibly seized on the provisions, even fought amid the waves for a morsel of bread, drank all the wine they could seize, and the French chronicler declared that he saw fully a thousand drunk on the wine of Ossy and Spain.||

On his march along the sea coast to Dublin, Richard received a message from Art MacMurrough, asking for a conference with himself or someone on his behalf; the Earl of Gloucester was chosen and met Art near, or in, the Vale of Ovoca. Each was accompanied by a large retinue, but they held their conference apart in front of the opposing forces. Art, dressed in a pink robe, was mounted on a splendid horse, without housing or saddle, and his horse galloped so fast to the place of meeting, that the French historian declares that he never saw hare, deer, or any other animal run so fast. There was much talk between Gloucester and Art, but the conference ended in nothing, for Art would make no terms except on condition that his person and possessions were to be unmolested, while Richard would grant no such terms, and swore that he would never leave Ireland until he had Art in his power. His army swelled to 30,000 by additions from the Anglo-Irish lords, Richard soon arrived in Dublin, the provost and sheriffs feasted the soldiers sumptuously, and their

\* Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 281.

† *Hibernica*, p. 51.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 52. "That for all the gold in the world he would not submit himself, but would continue to warr and endamage the King in all that he mought."

|| The names of the places passed through have not been given by Creton, but the route has been traced, I think accurately, by Magee. (pp. 56-59).



late ills were quickly forgotten. His cousin, the Duke of Albemarle, also arrived from England with large supplies of men and money, and Richard, still bent on capturing Art MacMurrough, divided his army into three divisions, bade them proceed in different directions in quest of the troublesome chief and offered 100 marks for whoever should bring him alive or dead into his power. But the quest was fruitless and the army returned without effecting anything. In the meantime Richard indulged in feasts and revels in Dublin, but in the midst of all this gaiety, news came from England that the Duke of Lancaster had raised a formidable insurrection, and Richard returned to England by way of Waterford, only to find himself deprived of his crown, as he was soon afterwards of his life.\*

The change of dynasty in England did not affect Ireland much. Unlike his predecessor, Henry IV. did not try conclusions with Art MacMurrough, nor could he, for he had more than sufficient to occupy him at home. Glendower had risen in rebellion in Wales, the Scotch declared war, the attitude of the French king was one of irritation and menace, some French nobles, led by the Duke of Orleans, fitted out several vessels and made descents on the south coast of England, the religious controversies of the Lollards were a source of constant ferment, and the formidable revolt of the Percies in the north all but succeeded in the defeat of Henry, at the stubbornly fought battle of Shrewsbury.† Surrounded by so many dangers—all his efforts required to maintain himself on the throne which he had usurped—the King concerned himself little with Irish affairs. He appointed his son Thomas, Viceroy (1401), but that prince was but a boy‡ and the duties of his office were discharged by deputies; and Scrope and Ormond succeeded each other in that office without anything of note occurring, except that the citizens of Dublin attacked the O'Byrnes of Wicklow (1405), and killed 500 of them, and the Prior of Conal fell upon a party of Irish in Kildare and killed 200 of them.||

Victorious over his enemies, holding in security his ancient possessions and recent conquests, supported and obeyed by the other Leinster chiefs, Art MacMurrough during these years remained for the most part quiescent, and was only roused to activity, when the English colonists at Wexford became restive. When they did, he quickly reduced them to obedience and seized or burned many English castles in Wexford, Carlow and Kildare

\* *Hibernica*, pp. 53-54. Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, pp. 283-7.

† Lingard, Vol. III., pp. 201-14.

‡ He was only in his twelfth year. (Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 294.)

|| Magee, pp. 69-70.

(1406).\* In a quarrel between the Earls of Ormond and Desmond (1404), he fought on Desmond's side, though it was strange he was never able to crush Ormond, nor capture his stronghold at Kilkenny; and it is an evidence of Ormond's great ability that he was enabled to hold his own among hostile and powerful chiefs and preserved his capital from falling into their hands. The old Earl died (1404), the deputy, Scrope, tried to reconcile the new Earl and the Earl of Desmond and at length succeeded, and with these two a strong confederacy was formed against MacMurrough of which Scrope himself was the leader; other allies were the Prior of Kilmainham and also a contingent from the citizens of Dublin. With such an army Scrope hoped to succeed where Richard II. had failed, and with Desmond and Ormond he marched south (1407) towards Carlow. On the way he encountered Teige O'Carroll, who was proceeding to MacMurrough's aid, and whom he defeated with heavy loss, O'Carroll himself falling in the battle.† Six miles from Callan, he came face to face with MacMurrough and an obstinate battle was fought. The advantage was with the Irish in the early part of the day, but the tide turned, and after a hard fought battle, Art was defeated and O'Nolan, one of the Leinster chiefs, was killed. And the English chronicler asserts, and seems to believe, that for the space of three hours the sun stood still in the heavens, so that the English would have light to finish the destruction of their foes.‡ But MacMurrough was not much weakened or dispirited by this defeat. Scrope fell back to Kilkenny and the next year died of the plague at Castledermot; Art at once became active, attacked and overran the English possessions, and did not cease until, at the head of a large army, he encamped under the walls of Dublin.||

The Viceroy, Thomas of Lancaster, had been three times in Ireland, previous to his coming over, in 1408. On each occasion he was friendly with the Butlers, but for some reason he conceived an antipathy for the Earl of Kildare, and when that noble was elected Deputy (1405), in place of Ormond, who had died, Prince Thomas instantly cancelled his appointment and appointed Scrope in his place.\*\* On his fourth coming over (1408), Kildare went to meet him at Carlingford and pay him his respects, as Viceroy and prince of the blood, but his reward was to be arrested and cast into prison out of which he had to be ransomed by the payment of 300 marks. Besides this the Viceroy plundered

\* *Four Masters.*

† *Annals of Clonmacnoise.*

‡ *Marlborough's Chronicle.*

|| *Four Masters.* Magee, p. 77.

\*\* Magee, pp. 71-72.

Kildare's castles and carried away his plate and money.\* Enriched by this plunder and by the 2000 marks, which he had given him when leaving England,† he meditated great things in Ireland and called a Council at Dublin to concert measures against the Irish chiefs; and by the aid of the Anglo-Irish nobles and the citizens of Dublin he had soon a large army under his command. Nor had he to go far in search of the Irish enemies, for it was just then that Art MacMurrough with all his forces lay encamped near Dublin and it may be assumed that he had with him the other Leinster chiefs—the O'Byrnes, O'Nolans and O'Tooles. To these may be added O'Connor of Offaly, who had often fought the English and whose son and heir had been killed (1406), while fighting against Birmingham.‡ It was his interest as well as Art's to see the English beaten, nor was there any reason for jealousy between these two chiefs. The Viceroy had mustered all the crown tenants of Ireland || so that the fighting forces of the Pale were ranged under his command, Jenico d'Artois, Butler, Prior of Kilmainham and the rest. The English marched out from the city and the battle took place at Kilmainham, the result being that they were defeated, one of their chiefs, Hitsun Tuite, killed and the Duke of Lancaster himself dangerously wounded. The whole of the ancient Kingdom of Leinster, up to the very walls of Dublin, was now in Art MacMurrough's hands, and the condition to which the Viceroy was reduced is described by one of his courtiers, who wrote on his behalf to Henry IV. :—"His soldiers have deserted him, the people of his household are on the point of leaving him; he is so destitute of money that he hath not a penny nor a penny can he get credit for." As soon as he was better of his wound, Prince Thomas returned to England, appointed the Prior of Kilmainham as his Deputy, and did not again come to Ireland.\*\*

Nor was this the only disaster that overtook the English at this period and that threatened the final extinction of their power. Allied with Mageoghegan of Westmeath, O'Connor of Offaly captured castles and towns from the neighbouring English (1408), took the Sheriff of Meath prisoner (1411), and gained the victory of Killechin (1414), where the Baron of Skreen and many English nobles were slain, and the Baron's son and many others taken prisoners, for whose release a sum of 1200 marks was paid.††

\* Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 300. His crime was that "with Adam O'Nolan he interfered with the right of the Crown to appoint a prebend at Maynooth."

† Cox, pp. 146-7.

‡ *Four Masters*.

|| Gilbert's *Viceroy*s.

\*\* Magee, pp. 77-80.

†† *Four Masters*.



The Irish soldiers of that day fought well in the open, but they had not learned to capture fortified towns, and after the battle of Kilmainham Art MacMurrough made no attempt to capture Dublin. It was well fortified, perhaps impossible to take from the land side, nor could the inhabitants be starved out, for the sea was open to them and the Irish had no vessels to blockade it: and when Art MacMurrough had buried his dead and attended to the wounded he retired to his headquarters at New Ross. Two years later the O'Farrells were defeated by the Deputy and the O'Byrnes defeated the Prior of Kilmainham and the citizens of Dublin in 1413.\* In this latter year, the Prior of Kilmainham and 1600 men went to France, to assist Henry V. in his wars, and the new Lord Deputy—Stanley—while making no war on MacMurrough and O'Connor, persecuted and plundered clergy and laity and subjected many of them to "cold, hardship and famine." For all his cruelties, especially towards the poets, he was satirized by the poet O'Higgins, and it is gravely recorded that he lived after this but five weeks "for he died (1414) of the virulence of the lampoons."† After Stanley came Cranley, Archbishop of Dublin, and then a really able man was appointed Viceroy—Sir John Talbot—Lord Furnival.‡ But, perhaps for want of men and money, he formed no great plans and embarked on no great war, nor was his term of office remarkable for anything except that he robbed and plundered indiscriminately, English || and Irish alike, and every year he made a circuit through Meath and Louth, took all he could lay hands on; and when he returned to England he carried with him "the curses of many, because he, being run in debt for victuals and divers other things, would pay little or nothing at all."\*\*\*

Except for some small war with the English of Wexford, whom he quickly subdued, the closing years of Art MacMurrough were spent in peace. In one of these battles his son defeated the Wexfordmen (1416), with the loss of 340 killed or wounded, or prisoners. The next year, after being 42 years the head of the Leinster clans, Art himself died,†† the ablest, the most skilful, the most successful chief whom Ireland had sent to combat the English, since Strongbow first landed on her soil.

\* *Four Masters.*

† *Ibid.*

‡ Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 304. He came over in 1414, being appointed Viceroy for 6 years at an annual allowance of £2,666 13s. 4d.

|| Only the "degenerate" English:

\*\* Marlborough's *Chronicle* at 1419:

†† *Four Masters.* There was a suspicion that he was poisoned.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

### *Decay of English Power.*

Disturbed state of Ireland in the fifteenth century—The Leinster chiefs—Weakened condition of the Pale—The Talbots and Butlers—The Viceroys and the native chiefs—Payments of Black rent—Ormond and Desmond quarrel—Talbot appointed Viceroy—The Duke of York succeeds him—His relations with the Irish—Returned to England—Wars of the Roses—Triumph of the Yorkists—The Earl of Ormond executed—The Butlers and Fitzgeralds at war—Viceroyalty of Tiptoft—Execution of Desmond—Revolt of Garret Fitzgerald—Earl of Kildare Viceroy—The Pale—Its limits—Surrounded by a dyke—Poverty and impotence of the executive at Dublin—Lord Grey and Kildare—Folly of the Irish chiefs—State of Connaught—and of Thomond—O'Brien captures Limerick—Dissensions in Ulster—Opportunity of the natives to expel the English allowed to pass.

THE years that followed the death of Art MacMurrough, it might be said the whole fifteenth century, were years of strife and discord, rivalling the most disturbed period of Irish history. There was war everywhere, north and south and west, and on the borders of the Pale and within it, wars between rival candidates for the chieftaincy of their clans, wars between neighbouring chiefs and combinations of these, wars between the Anglo-Irish lords themselves, wars of aggression and of spoliation, wars of retaliation and revenge. But in all these wars we would seek in vain for any national or patriotic object, any unity of purpose or design. Nor among the various leaders, whose mischievous activity caused so much blood to flow, was there even one whose talents lifted him above his contemporaries, who was capable of rising superior to his surroundings, of looking beyond the narrow limits of his clan, and of making an effort to rescue, not only his clan, but his country, from the ruin into which she was being hurried by the shortsightedness and folly of her sons. Peace and order and settled government were unknown, law was known but only to be despised, for it was the law of the stronger, and that only, which prevailed.

During the closing years of his life, Art MacMurrough showed no eagerness for war, and never once did he measure swords

with the Viceroy, Talbot, not even when that renowned soldier defeated O'More of Leix (1415), burned and destroyed the corn of the district, wounded and killed numbers of the people and broke down two strong castles.\* Perhaps the Leinster king waited for a more favourable opportunity to attack the Pale, when its resources would be more exhausted, or at least be controlled by someone less capable than Talbot was. But his son and successor, Donogh, was not equally prudent, and, with O'Connor of Offaly, he was at war with the English (1419), and advanced as far as Dublin, where he was defeated and taken prisoner. His ally, O'Connor, was taken prisoner, at the same time, but managed to escape, while Donogh was taken to England and lodged in the Tower of London, where he was kept a prisoner for nine years.† Nor was he then liberated but for a heavy ransom, which was cheerfully paid by his own clansmen.‡ During these years, a kinsman, Gerald Kavanagh, was acknowledged head of the MacMurroghs, but when Donogh was set free his kinsman made way for him, and he stepped into the place his father had filled with so much honour. The recollection of his imprisonment embittered him against the English, and only a short time passed until he was again at war with them, though his success was not remarkable, for while he won one battle against them (1431), he lost a second, both battles being fought near Dublin. In the last battle his ally, O'Toole, was taken prisoner.|| But Donogh was persevering, and the next year he again attacked the English and defeated them with the loss of their leader, Tobin. At a later date (1443), he chastised the English of Wexford, who had defeated and killed his relative, Murtogh Kavanagh, and he compelled them to pay a fine of 800 marks as compensation for Murtogh's death.\*\* The next year some of his kinsmen rose in rebellion against him, and were aided by the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles. In the war that followed, Donogh was able to hold his own by the aid of O'Connor of Offaly, but a little later the quarrel was renewed, and Donogh was defeated and slain.†† His successor was his cousin, Donal Reveagh, who occupied the position until 1476. He must have been a man of vigour and capacity to maintain his position so long, but his resources were employed in keeping his neighbours—English and Irish—in subjection,

\* Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, pp. 304-5.

† *Ibid.*, p. 311. Magee's *Art MacMurrough*, p. 104.

‡ *Four Masters*, 1428.

|| *Ibid.*

\*\* *Ibid.*

†† *Annals of MacFirbis* (quoted by O'Donovan). Magee, 105. It is Magee who adds that Donogh was slain, I know not on what authority.



and while the rulers of the Pale made no attempt to conquer him, neither did he make any attempt to gather together the strength of Leinster and inflict upon them a crushing blow, as in similar circumstances Art MacMurrough might have done.

The defeat and imprisonment of Donal Kavanagh MacMurrough, the troubles of a disputed succession, and the weakness which these troubles caused, were all favourable circumstances for the subjugation of Leinster to English rule. And if the Pale had been prosperous and its forces united, such a leader as Talbot might probably have interfered in the MacMurrough quarrels, and with disastrous effect on them. But the Pale was weak, its people were poor, harassed by inroads from the neighbouring chiefs, taxed beyond their strength, subjected to coyne and livery, even by the Viceroy; no help came from England, for all its resources were required in the wars with France; Talbot was sent to these same French wars, and his successors had not his ability; and to make matters worse, there was discord among the English of the Pale. Sir John Talbot's brother was Archbishop of Dublin,\* and he was no friend of Ormond, the strongest supporter in Ireland of the House of Lancaster. Between these two men there was never any cordiality, they seldom or never co-operated in any public object, more usually they disagreed and thwarted and obstructed one another, and there were charges and countercharges between them, and appeals to England. Each had influence with the King, and according as that influence failed or was successful, their power in Ireland rose or fell. Sometimes the Archbishop was Lord Deputy or Viceroy, sometimes it was Ormond, but each, during his period of office, used the powers of which he was master, not so much to advance English interests, as to elevate his own faction and to humiliate his rival. Within twenty-five years (1422-47), Ormond was the head of the Irish Government, either as Viceroy or Deputy, no less than five times, and the Archbishop was six times,† as well as being for a time (1423-6) Lord Chancellor. During that time the quarrels between these two powerful men continued, and twice these quarrels assumed such dangerous proportions, that King Henry VI. had to personally intervene and command them to live at peace.‡ It was divided counsels and chieftains' jealousies which made the Irish always so weak, so incapable, either to resist or attack their foes. Similar causes produced similar effects among the English ;

\* He was Archbishop of Dublin from 1417 to 1449. (*Ware's Bishops*.)

† Ormond's terms of office were, 1422-24-26-40-43. Talbot's terms of office were, 1423-27-30-36-45-47. (*Harris's Ware*, Vol. II., p. 107.)

‡ Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, pp. 316 17, 328, 337-42.

the Pale was undefended, its inhabitants were at the mercy of the Irish chiefs; and nothing could purchase their security except to buy off the hostility of these chiefs. The English officials were grasping and mercenary, little troubled about advancing the King's interests and eager to enrich themselves, they levied heavy burdens on the English Colonists, and seldom paid for anything they got.\* Reduced to poverty and impotence, the chief men of the Pale had already addressed a memorial to Henry V., begging that he would come to their relief as they were surrounded by Irish enemies and English rebels, and as this petition was unheeded, they addressed a further one to the same quarter, a few years later (1420), begging Henry to place their condition before the Pope, so that he might preach a new crusade against the Irish, for apparently they believed, or at least wished the Pope to believe, that the Irish were no better than the heathens, and might be regarded as the enemies of God and His Church.†

The war during these years between the English and the Irish was desultory and unimportant, and led to no result except this—that the English still further lost, as the Irish still further gained, ground. During his first Viceroyalty (1418), Sir John Talbot marched against an Irish chief—Magennis of Iveagh, in Down, and, having defeated him in battle, carried off a great part of his people's cattle, but Magennis obtained reinforcements, pursued the Viceroy laden with his spoil, defeated him with the loss of many English, and recovered the greater part of his cattle.‡ Two years later, the Earl of Ormond joined with O'Neill of Tirowen, and both attacked and defeated Magennis, though the victory brought no advantage to the English interest, for its purpose and effect were to compel Magennis to submit to O'Neill.§ The unusual spectacle of O'Neill and O'Donnell combining their strength was witnessed in 1423, for, in that year, aided by the other Ulster chiefs, they marched against Dundalk, compelled the English colony there to pay tribute encountered the English forces near that town under the command of the Lord Deputy, defeated them with the loss of one hundred men, and, besides obtaining great spoils from them, compelled the English in Louth and Meath to pay Black Rent, and only on this condition would they make peace.\*\* With large reinforcements from England, Ormond marched

\* Gilbert's *Viceroy's*, pp. 313-14.

† *Ibid.* pp. 314-15.

‡ *Four Masters*.

§ *Ibid.* This Earl of Ormond, and O'Neill, were married to two sisters, daughters of Donal MacMurrough, King of Leinster. (Magee, p. 105.)

\*\* *Four Masters*.

north, in the following year, and to some extent retrieved Mortimer's defeat, for he did much damage to the Irish and attacked and drove from his territory Magennis of Iveagh. These triumphs of the English were not destined to be lasting in their results, as O'Neill attacked Dundalk (1430), and again compelled that town as well as the whole of Meath to pay him tribute.\* A little later, in some obscure expedition, the English captured O'Donnell of Tirconnell and kept him imprisoned, in revenge for which they were attacked by his relative, O'Connor of Offaly (1436), during which war he did them much damage "by burning, plundering and slaying"; † while later still (1442), the English made their way into Wicklow and defeated the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles, only in turn to be attacked by these warlike clans and defeated with the loss of eighty men, and the capturing of all the booty they were carrying away. Amid these little wars, where success and failure constantly fluctuated, the Pale was becoming less and less in extent, until scarce any part was left, except the County of Dublin, where the King's power was unquestioned and supreme. English there were elsewhere, but they had to purchase peace by the payment of Black Rent, and to such poverty was the Irish Government reduced that when the hall and windows of Dublin Castle required to be repaired it was necessary to break up and sell an old unused royal seal ‡ (1427); nor was the public revenue sufficient to carry on the government, for the expenses of the Viceroy and his officers exceeded the yearly revenue by the amount of £1,456. ||

In the disputes between the Talbots and Butlers neither the Earl of Desmond nor the Earl of Kildare had hitherto mixed. The Geraldines and the Butlers were rarely on the friendliest terms, but to further his own ends Desmond united with Butler (1443), in some quarrel against the Talbot faction. Ormond was then Viceroy, with all the power and influence that office gave. He was grateful for the timely assistance of Desmond, and to express his gratitude he obtained for him a royal licence to purchase whatever lands he pleased, no matter by what service they were held from the King, and at the same time he was constituted by Letters Patent, governor of the counties of Waterford, Cork, Limerick and Kerry, and, in addition, was excused from attendance in parliament.\*\* Such privileges increased Desmond's power enormously, but neither his loyalty

\* *Four Masters.*

† *Ibid.*

‡ Leland, Vol. II., p. 22.

|| Gilbert's *Viceroy's*, p. 342.

\*\* Leland, Vol. II., p. 25.



to the Lancastrian dynasty nor his affection for the Butlers grew, and, forgetful of the favours he had received, and confident in his own resources and strength, on some pretext he actually went to war with Ormond in the next year, nor was Ormond with all the forces which a Viceroy could command able to conquer the haughty Geraldine.\* His enemies at Dublin were not slow to make the most of his failure, and the shower of accusations against him fell thick and fast. The King was told that he was inactive and infirm from age, that he wanted the capacity to enlarge the Pale or even to defend it against attack, that he was grasping, avaricious and corrupt, and had used his high office of Viceroy for the advancement of his friends and the enrichment of himself. Strong in his attachment to Ormond, the King refused to listen to these accusations, or at least to believe them, but Ormond's enemies were numerous and persistent; the charges were often repeated and in various forms; and at length, he was removed from his position (1446), and Sir John Talbot, now Earl of Shrewsbury, was sent over as Viceroy and given a force of 700 men to assist in subduing rebellion, and reasserting the weakened authority of England, both within and without the Pale.† Yet he accomplished little, and except that he reduced the refractory subjects of the King within the Pale and inflicted defeat on O'Connor of Offaly,‡ he could not be credited with having done anything else during this, his last viceroyalty. But from so famous a man, who had earned so great a name in the French wars,|| the Palesmen expected much, and during his tenure of office they assumed their old airs of superiority over the native Irish, looked down upon them with contempt as an inferior and subject race, loudly demanded the enactment of repressive laws against them, and, at a parliament in Trim (1447), it was enacted that Irish customs were illegal and penal, and that whoever did not shave his upper lip\*\* was to be regarded as an Irish enemy.

Talbot's successor was Richard, Duke of York. Descended

\* *Annals of MacFirbis.*

† Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*, p. 159. Leland, Vol. II., p. 27.

‡ *Four Masters.*

|| Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 350. Such was the terror he inspired in France that French mothers quietened their children by telling them that Talbot was coming. He was killed at Chatillon in 1453.

\*\* Cox, pp. 159-60. "Every man must keep his upper lip shaved or else may be used as an Irish enemy:" which meant that he might even be put to death, for the law did not recognise the existence of a "mere Irishman," except to exterminate him. This enactment made it criminal even to *look like an Irishman*, as the Irish did *not* shave their upper lips.

from the third son of Edward III.,\* his title to the English throne was superior to that of the princes of the Lancastrian line. But it was not the superior claims of descent that placed Henry IV. on the throne; by force he won it; and by force he retained it; and in the case of his son, Henry V., the defective title by which his father or himself held the throne was forgotten amid the splendours of Agincourt. With his death there came a change. The disasters of the next reign, the loss of France, the incapacity of the King himself revived the memory of his defective claims of descent; and there were many who turned from Henry VI. to the Duke of York, and recollected that his house had superior claims as coming from an elder branch; and contrasted what England might be under an able and energetic prince, such as York was, to what she was under the discredited rule of an imbecile king. York had been regent of France, but the Lancastrian party grew jealous of his power, and relegated him to the lesser position of Viceroy of Ireland. To lessen the humiliation of his change from a greater to a more obscure office, he was armed with the full powers of royalty, was granted the whole revenue of Ireland for ten years, got in addition from the English Treasury 4,000 marks for the first year and £2,000 for each succeeding year of his office; he could also farm the King's private lands, displace all officers, levy what troops he wanted, appoint his own Deputy, and return to England as often as he pleased.† His policy in Ireland was to win over by kindness the native chiefs, and at the same time to reconcile the Anglo-Irish lords. An Ireland peaceful and contented, no longer harassed by war or weakened by contention, would redound to his credit in England, and in the struggle which he foresaw to be impending might attract the support of many, for it would be said that he who had established peace and unity in Ireland was well worthy to be king. Nor would kindness shown to the Irish be wasted. They responded quickly to such treatment; what they rarely experienced they appreciated all the more when they received it; and so rapid and striking was the effect of the new policy, that within a month of his coming to Ireland he had obtained the support of Magennis of Iveagh with 600 horse and foot, of MacMahon with 800, of MacCarten with a similar number, and of the O'Reillys with 700 men. The O'Byrnes of Wicklow who refused to be reconciled he marched against and defeated and compelled them to pay tribute, to accept English law in their territory, to wear English dress and to learn the English

\* The Duke of Clarence and Elizabeth de Burgho, daughter of the Earl of Ulster. (Hume's *History of England*. Genealogical Table H.)

† Cox, pp. 160-1. He landed in Ireland, July, 1449.

tongue. The Anglo-Irish chiefs did him homage—Ormond and Desmond and Roche and Barret and Cogan—and from the Irish chiefs, O'Neill, O'Farrell, MacGeoghegan and others as many beeves were sent to his kitchen as he required ; and it began to be said in England that before twelve months the wildest Irishman in Ireland would be sworn English.\*

In pursuance of his peacemaking policy he had the Earls of Desmond and Ormond stand sponsors for his infant son, George, afterwards the ill-fated Duke of Clarence, and thus he purchased the good will of the native Irish by reviving the old institution of gossipred, while he brought Desmond and Ormond together and succeeded, as he hoped, in having them lay aside their ancient enmity, and shaking hands in friendship and reconciliation at the baptismal font. Within the Pale he found that the chiefs, though English subjects, were constantly violating the Statute of Kilkenny by coyne and livery, that they were in the habit of keeping more horsemen and footmen than they wanted for their personal defence, and that, accompanied by these, they went with their wives and families to the houses of their tenants, where they feasted at the tenants' expense, destroyed the corn and meadows, took what they pleased, paid for nothing, and sometimes killed the tenant who objected to these exactions. Summoning a parliament at Dublin (October, 1450), these abuses were declared illegal by statute, and such enactment was good ; but it was otherwise with another, made by the same parliament, which declared it lawful, and even meritorious, to kill the robbers with whom the Pale was infested, for one who was a robber and evil-doer himself, could murder even the well-disposed, and plead that it was an Irish robber whom he had killed.† But though York accomplished much in a short time, there was much still to be done. A petition from the English subjects of Cork, Youghal and Kinsale to the Duke declared, that the Anglo-Irish chiefs in these districts were fighting among themselves, and by the aid of the Irish, and that they had so weakened one another, that the Irish had got back much of the English lands. The state of Waterford and Wexford was found to be similar ; ‡ and Mageoghegan of Westmeath entered the Duke of York's own lands in Meath and ravaged them, and such was the strength of his followers that York who marched to

\* Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, pp. 353-4.

† Cox, p. 161. That the murdered man was a peaceably disposed Irishman made no difference: the murderer could plead he was Irish, and he was held blameless, and he could add that he mistook him for a robber, though he knew well he was not.

‡ Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, pp. 357-8.



Mullingar was unable to make headway against him, and from necessity had to make terms with him and forgive him any injuries he had done.\* The result of his own weakness was attributed to want of money, and in sending a messenger to England, complaining that his stipulated allowance was not paid by the English Treasurer, he declared he could not hold the country for the King without money from England, and that if such money were not soon sent him, he would be compelled to leave Ireland and to live in England upon his poor livelihood, "for I had lever (he said) be dead than any inconvenience should fall thereunto in my default, for it shall never be chronicled nor remain in scripture, by the grace of God, that Ireland was lost by my negligence."† The Duke did return to England (1451), leaving as his deputy, Sir James Butler, a son of the Earl of Ormond, and recently created Earl of Wiltshire. The old Earl of Ormond still lived, and the native Annals go to show that though he was old he was not inactive. He took O'Dempsey's castle at Leix, liberated Birmingham who had been detained in prison, marched as a conqueror through Offaly and Annally, compelled the O'Reillys of Cavan and the MacMahons of Louth to tender him submission, and advanced into Tirowen and compelled O'Neill to take back his wife, whom he had put away, and when he had done all this he went back to Ardee, where in that same year (1452), he died.‡

The son and successor of Ormond, already Lord Deputy, was appointed (1453) Viceroy for ten years, but he concerned himself little about Ireland and acted only for a short time and then through his deputy, May, Archbishop of Armagh. As Earl of Wiltshire he was an English nobleman and became Lord High Treasurer of England, had vast estates in England, was allied by marriage with the Duke of Somerset, and had greater anxiety to support the claims and watch over the interests of the Lancastrians in England than to concern himself with the petty details of Irish government. || In the following year the Duke of York again became Viceroy, but he, too, ruled by deputy, the Earl of Kildare being appointed to that office.\*\* Like Ormond, his interests were greatest in England, for the struggle between the White Rose of York and the Red Rose of Lancaster had begun. The Duke was the head and champion of the former, and at the battle of St. Albans (1455), he defeated his opponents and captured Henry VI. whom, however, he soon released and

\* *Four Masters.*

† Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 362.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 364-5. *Four Masters.*

|| Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 366.

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 367.

still recognised as King, but only on condition that he himself was declared Protector of England, while he still remained Viceroy of Ireland. Four years after the battle of St. Albans, war again broke out, but this time York was defeated at Ludlow (1459),\* was declared a traitor by the Lancastrians and fled with his son, the Earl of Rutland, to Ireland, where he was received with enthusiasm by the Anglo-Irish, especially by the Geraldines—both Kildare and Desmond. His popularity with the Irish stood him in good stead. Declared guilty of high treason by the Lancastrians and therefore of a crime punishable by death, one of Ormond's retainers, Overy by name, was sent from England with writs to seize York. But that prince, in his capacity as Viceroy, had already summoned a parliament at Dublin at which, under his inspiration, it was decreed, that the Irish Parliament was independent of that of England, that no laws enacted in England could be enforced or were binding in Ireland, except such as were freely accepted by the Irish Parliament, that no writs could be enforced in Ireland, except those under the great seal of Ireland, and finally, that whoever, directly or indirectly, sought to compass the Duke of York's destruction, or to provoke rebellion or disobedience towards him, should stand as attainted of high treason against the person of the King. This enactment was quickly put in force, and Overy, when he landed with his writs, was seized, tried, found guilty, and hanged, drawn and quartered.† It may have been that the Anglo-Irish in this legislation were prompted by a desire to assert the independence of the Irish Parliament and free it from a state of dependence on the Parliament of England, but it must have been considerations of personal safety and interest that moved the Duke of York, and in these proceedings he was much more concerned about himself than he was about the independence of the Irish Parliament. The activity and influence of York's son, Edward, aided by Warwick, inflicted defeat on the Lancastrians, and York was enabled to go to England where, however, he was defeated and slain in the following year.‡ But at the battle of Towton (1461), his death and defeat were soon avenged, his enemy, the Earl of Ormond, was taken prisoner and beheaded, and his son, Edward, taking the title of Edward IV., ascended the English throne.

With the death of Ormond the Butlers had lost their leader, but their power was still considerable; they had many friends

\* Hume's *History of England*.

† Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, pp. 368-70.

‡ Hume. *Leland*, Vol. II., p. 44. Of the 5,000 which made up his army at Wakefield, most were Irish.

in Ireland and they had an able chief in Sir John Butler, who claimed to be the heir to the earldom of Ormond. Hitherto, in the Wars of the Roses, he had fought in England, and he had fought often against the Fitzgeralds.\* The quarrel was now renewed in Ireland. The English Parliament had attainted him of high treason, the Irish Parliament had confirmed that act, but he eluded his enemies in England, landed at Waterford (1462), and with a force partly Irish and partly English he attacked that stronghold. Desmond advanced to its relief and the opposing forces met at Piltown, in Kilkenny, where an obstinate battle was fought. The Butlers were defeated, their best leader, MacRichard Butler, was taken prisoner and, as showing the value attached to some old manuscripts in Ireland, he was ransomed by giving two old manuscripts to Desmond, which had long been in the possession of the Ormond family.† The Butlers were defeated but not crushed, for in the next year Sir John Butler was again in rebellion and at the head of a strong force, but again he was attacked and defeated by Desmond, his lands overrun, and his castles taken or destroyed.‡ The House of York was triumphant in England, and the Geraldines in Ireland. Kildare was appointed Lord High Chancellor for life, and Desmond Lord Deputy, under the Duke of Clarence as Viceroy. The Deputy reduced to obedience some refractory English of Meath and made terms with some of the border Irish chiefs, but he was not successful in an expedition against the O'Byrnes,|| and he was defeated by O'Brien of Thomond. His services to the House of York were held in grateful remembrance by Edward IV., and when the Bishop of Meath made personal complaint to the King against Desmond, his complaints produced no effect except to increase the esteem in which Desmond was held; and he was (1464), sent back to Ireland with augmented powers.\*\*

But the favour of King Edward did not continue. Desmond was deprived of his position (1467), and a new Viceroy was sent over—Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester.†† Summoning a Parliament at Drogheda, the Viceroy had Desmond and Kildare attainted for treason, for "alliances and fosterage with the King's enemies." Desmond boldly went to Drogheda to face his accusers, but he

\* Davies' *Historical Tracts*, p. 74.

† Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, pp. 378-9.

‡ *Ibid.*, 380. It was this Sir John Butler, afterwards Earl of Ormond, who was described by Edward IV. as "the finest gentleman in Christendom."

|| *Annals of MacFirbis*, 1463.

\*\* Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, pp. 381-2.

†† Though a cruel man, Tiptoft was an accomplished scholar. (Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 385.)



was seized by Tiptoft and put to death. The crime with which he was charged was one of which many others were guilty and were allowed to go unpunished, and should have been entirely insufficient in the case of one who had done such service to the House of York. It may be that the story is correct which attributes his tragic fate to the rage of an insulted queen. This lady was Elizabeth Woodville, first married to Sir John Grey, and secondly to Edward IV. When the monarch solicited her hand, she declared she was too proud to be his mistress and too low to be his queen, yet Edward married her and she became queen of England. But the marriage was disapproved of by many of the King's friends, Desmond amongst them, who declared to the King that he had done wrong in marrying a person so much beneath him, and that he ought to have her divorced and make an alliance with some foreign princess. When the queen heard what the Earl had said she determined to be revenged, plotted against him, got him dismissed from office and appointed her friend Tiptoft in his place, and got possession of the King's seal and affixed it to a document, which she gave to the new Viceroy, and which authorised Desmond's execution. Whatever be the real reason for the act Desmond was much lamented in Ireland. He was a man of many parts, a great scholar, hospitable, humane and charitable, munificent to poets and antiquarians and deeply versed in Gaelic lore. His tragic end was bitterly resented by native and Anglo-Irish, by cleric and layman, and when Tiptoft was taken prisoner (1470), and put to death, his fate was regarded as retribution from heaven for his treatment of Desmond.\*

The English found it difficult enough to maintain authority within the Pale itself, even with the aid of the Geraldines, but their difficulties were enormously increased when Garret Fitzgerald, a kinsman of the dead Earl, gathered together his English and Irish retainers and marched through Meath and Kildare, laying waste the English possessions as he passed. The Viceroy was unable to make headway against him, and thinking it the safest thing to do, he was withdrawn from his position, Kildare was exonerated from the charges made against him† and was appointed to the vacant office. Either as Viceroy, or Deputy, he was at the head of the Irish Government until his death (1477), and his son, Gerald after him, was, with a short interval, at the head of the Government until the accession of the Tudors. These years were years of disorder and weakness

\* Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, pp. 386-7. Meehan's *Geraldines*, pp. 42-44  
*Four Masters*.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 390-1.

within the Pale. A line drawn from Tallaght to Saggart marked its limits in the County of Dublin; it included but little of Kildare, no part of Meath west of Trim, and the most part of the County of Louth\*; and this district was so harassed by the border Irish, so wasted by their inroads, that neither life nor property was secure. The ancient example of the Roman walls in Britain was copied and a dyke was made from Tallaght to Saggart and then northwards, at the making of which it was enacted by Parliament all able-bodied men in the Pale should labour, from an hour and a half after sunrise until sunset; and whoever broke down this dyke was heavily fined, and if he allowed his goats or hogs or cattle to injure it these animals were seized and confiscated. Along this rampart, at certain strategic points, castles were built, tenanted by "loyal English men," and as far as possible these castles were in easy communication, one with the other, so that they could combine their resources in case of attack.† With the object of keeping the inhabitants anglicised and saving them from Irish influences, they should wear the English dress and speak English and assume English manners. Irish rhymers were prohibited from coming among the English, and the English were prohibited from transacting business with the Irish.‡

These enactments the executive was impotent to enforce. For a time the Viceroy's army numbered but 80 archers, and when this was felt to be miserably insufficient, it was increased to 160 archers and 63 spearmen, and though ultimately volunteers were enrolled, under the name of the "Brotherhood of St. George," the English forces remained weak and entirely inadequate for the defence of the colony. || The Irish and their Anglo-Irish allies viewed the amount of these forces with contempt, broke through the recently constructed dyke and had to be repeatedly bought off by the payment of Black Rent. The English traders were compelled to trade with the Irish, for in many cases there was no one else with whom they could deal, and in defiance of so many penal enactments Irish influences were on the increase even within the Pale. There were fosterings and alliances with the natives and gossips and rhymers; the Irish language was spoken; coyne and livery were exacted by the English themselves; and such was the lawless condition of the colony, that the Archbishop of Dublin was unable to visit his churches in the more remote portions of his diocese. Those

\* Stuart's *Historical Memoirs of Armagh* (Coleman's Ed.) p. 145; map:

† Gilbert's *Viceroy's*, p. 395.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 401-402.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 396.

who were given the privilege of coining money issued base money from the mint ;\* hungry officials were little concerned to advance the interests of England but were busy, by every species of exaction, in enriching themselves, and in addition these officials—the very highest placed of them—were unable to agree. Cornwalshe, the Chief Baron, abused Kildare, the Lord Deputy, at the Council table, charged Lord Ratoath with forgery and even attempted his life,† and Dowdall, a judge of the King's Bench, while going on a pilgrimage, was set upon by the Prior of Kilmainham with a drawn sword and put in fear and danger of his life. When Gerald, Earl of Kildare, was elected by the Irish Council to succeed his father as Lord Deputy (1477), he was soon superseded by order of the English King and Lord Grey was sent over to take his place. But Kildare refused to recognise him or his credentials ; he was backed up by the Irish Council ; the new Lord Deputy was refused the Great Seal of Ireland ; and when he attempted to enter Dublin Castle, its constable, the Prior of Kilmainham, broke down the drawbridge, garrisoned the Castle, and set Grey and his authority at defiance. And the friends of England were scandalised at the spectacle of Grey holding a Parliament and enacting laws at Trim (1478), while his rival, Kildare, at the same time was holding a Parliament and enacting laws at Naas.‡ The persistence of Kildare conquered. Grey was withdrawn, Kildare's disobedience was condoned ; in the weakened condition of the colony to attack such a man would be to destroy the feeble remnant of English authority, and instead of being punished he was re-appointed with largely augmented powers, such powers as made him almost an independent sovereign.¶ Perhaps it was hoped that with these increased powers, with his large family connections Anglo-Irish and native,\*\* he would at least be able to preserve, perhaps even to extend, the limits of the Pale, and to re-establish order and security within its bounds. But his success was not great, and in a Parliament held (1485), Sir Alexander Plunkett was authorised to *levy by distress from the English of Meath* the wages due to O'Connor of Offaly, a fact which shows that the English colony was so weak as to be unable to defend itself, and had to purchase the forbearance of this Irish chief.††

\* Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, pp. 398–9.

† *Ibid.*, p. 397.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 404–7.

¶ *Ibid.*, pp. 407–10. Also notes, pp. 600–1. Kildare got these powers in 1481. His office was that of Deputy to Prince Richard, Duke of York, who was nominally Viceroy.

\*\* One of Kildare's sisters was married to Henry O'Neill of Tirowen.

†† Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 420.



While the colony was thus weakened and disorganised, and the strength of England at home exhausted in disastrous civil wars, it would have been easy for the Irish to have broken through the rampart which encircled the Pale, and to have overwhelmed in ruin the feeble remnant of English power. A little unity, a small combination among chiefs, a capable and vigorous leader was all that was required; the work of Strongbow was reversed, and three centuries of spoliation and plunder were avenged. But there was no such combination, no such unity and no such leader. If we look to Connaught, we behold a province in which discord reigns supreme. Time has but aggravated its ills, even the semblance of a central authority has ceased to exist, for no prince receives the undivided allegiance of the natives, and the prospect of anyone doing so in the future may be set down as remote and almost impossible. With only the memory of their ancient power, the O'Connors still quarrelled among themselves, and the arrangement by which they were divided into two branches, instead of composing their differences only aggravated them. O'Connor Roe sometimes sought to assert a superiority over his kinsman, O'Connor Don, and sometimes had to defend himself against his attack. In these disputes they obtained the aid of the other Connaught chiefs, and sometimes the aid of O'Neill or O'Donnell from the northern province. And there were a few cases when an O'Connor chief, abler and stronger than others of his name, even challenged O'Neill or O'Donnell, and once even measured swords with O'Neill and O'Donnell, acting together.\* The example of the O'Connors was followed by the other Connaught chiefs who, like them, would recognise no law but their own wills. A subordinate position in the clan was despised by every aspiring member of the ruling family, and the squalid splendours of these petty chieftaincies were coveted with as much eagerness, and fought for with as much energy, and even ferocity, as if they contended for the throne of some mighty empire. When Turlogh O'Connor Roe died (1426), a desultory war was carried on by his sons on the one side and O'Connor Don on the other, partial success followed by temporary pre-eminence was attained by Cahal O'Connor Roe, but when *he* died these family quarrels were renewed, for Teige O'Connor Roe and Turlogh O'Connor Don each claimed to be the chiefs of the O'Connors, their rivalries were continued and transmitted to their descendants, nor did the struggle cease for the whole fifteenth century.† With other clans it was similar, and the record of the *Four Masters* is, that

\* *Four Masters*, 1422.

† *The O'Connors of Connaught*, pp. 159, *et seq.*

there were two rival O'Connors quarrelling (1445), two O'Farrels fighting for the chieftaincy of Annally\* and two MacDonaghs fighting for the chieftaincy of Tিরerill (1446). In this latter case the district was divided between the two rivals, but it was no more effective in establishing peace than in the case of the O'Connors. A war of succession raged in Hy-Many (1464), between the MacRannells (1473); and the Burkes, forgetting their Norman descent, abandoned the feudal system, had voluntarily submitted to the paralysing influence of the clan system instead, and fought among themselves with as much bitterness and passion as the O'Connors, or the O'Kellys.†

In the South, Desmond and the MacCarthys were at war (1430),‡ and such was the blindness of the MacCarthys to their own safety that they were (1449) quarrelling among themselves. Yet Munster was not so harassed by war as Connaught was. In Thomond there were disputes as to the chieftaincy but at least the power of the O'Briens was still great, and under the rule of Teige O'Brien an attempt was made to place Thomond in the proud position she occupied in the days of the great Brian. At the head of the Dalcassian chiefs he marched across the Shannon, met and defeated the Earl of Desmond, attacked and captured the city of Limerick, compelled that city to pay him a tribute of 60 marks a year, and compelled Desmond to cede to him the County of Limerick and the barony of Clanwilliam in Tipperary. He might, and probably would, have followed up these successes by attacking the northern princes and the Pale, but he died in a few months (1466);|| after his death fresh disputes broke out in Thomond, unity was at an end, and the hope of a Dalcassian prince becoming Ardri was extinguished finally and for ever.

In Ulster, O'Neill was first in power among its chiefs. In his palace at Ailech he lived where his ancestors had lived and ruled for a thousand years, and by the other northern chiefs was treated with a respect similar to that given by the ancient kings to the Ardri who ruled at Tara. But though his power was considerable and sufficient to extract some form of homage and tribute from the neighbouring clans, he was either careless or powerless to establish any real authority over them. These clans were still independent, ruled by their own chiefs, and while they sometimes helped, they also sometimes went to war with the O'Neills. This was especially the case with the O'Donnells, whose power was always little inferior to O'Neill, sometimes was

\* *Four Masters*, 1445.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.*

|| *Annals of MacFirbis.*

even superior, and who consistently refused to recognise the supremacy of Tirowen. They were seldom on the same side in battle, and more frequently were on opposite sides. They did unite against O'Connor Roe (1422), and in the following year, with the other Ulster chiefs, they defeated the English Viceroy, and a little later (1424), apparently fighting on the same side, they were defeated by Sir John Talbot, and an O'Neill and an O'Donnell were taken prisoners and had to be ransomed by their friends.\* But when O'Neill attacked Dundalk (1430), and compelled the English there to pay him tribute, as he did the English of Meath, O'Donnell was not fighting by his side; neither did he assist him to defeat the Savages of Down (1433). And when there were wars of succession in Tirconnell (1434), in Tirowen (1435), and again in Tirconnell (1461), the O'Neills and O'Donnells were ranged on opposite sides.†

This want of union between the northern chiefs rendered combination against the English impossible. But there is no evidence to show that any of these native chiefs wished the destruction of English power; they were just as eager to defeat and humiliate their own countrymen, and for that purpose were quite willing to purchase English assistance, as in fact they often did. With his own forces of Tirowen and such forces as MacMahon and Magennis and the other chiefs of the east of Ulster would have readily given him O'Neill could, without difficulty, during the civil wars in England, have destroyed the English colony in Ireland. To such forces as he could command an army of 200 men could offer no effective resistance, and this was as large a force as the Pale could supply. Like an old crumbling ruin, the whole structure of English authority was tottering to its fall, and one vigorous blow would have laid it level with the dust. But the blow was not given. O'Neill was satisfied to get his Black Rent, and the heir and successor of the high Kings of Erin was not ashamed, for hire, and for paltry hire, to act as the policeman of the Pale. The action, or rather inaction, of the Leinster chiefs was still harder to explain. Their territories, being nearest to the English colonists, had suffered most from their attacks. Their lands had been repeatedly laid waste and their clansmen robbed, and they knew that it was impotence alone that restrained the English from doing in the present what they had so often done in the past. The spirit of these English was still manifested in their laws and they still judged the Irish unworthy of being English subjects, fit only to be plundered and even murdered, and they declared it treason for an English

[ \* *Four Masters.*

[ † *Ibid.*



subject to associate with them, still more to copy their customs or speak their tongue.\* Yet O'Connor of Offaly remained quiet, because he was paid Black Rent from Meath and Kildare ; O'Carroll of Ely granted peace to the English of Kilkenny and Tipperary for an annual payment of £40 ; O'Brien of Thomond to Limerick for a like amount, MacCarthy to Cork and MacMurrough to Wexford.† Experience had taught nothing to these chiefs. Unmindful of the future, they contrasted the present with the past, congratulated themselves on the security which they enjoyed, and with childish vanity plumed themselves on having humbled the once dreaded English, and in each clan some venal bard was prepared to sing the praises of his chief, of his prowess in war and his triumphs over the hated foe.

\* Cox, p. 169. Enactment of the Parliament at Trim (1465.)

† These payments are given by Cox (*Hibernia Anglicana*, p. 166.)

Louth paid to O'Neill of Clanaboy £20.

Oriel paid to O'Neill of Tirowen £40.

Meath paid to O'Connor £60.

Kildare paid to O'Connor £20.

Kilkenny and Tipperary paid to O'Carroll £40.

Limerick paid to O'Brien £40.

Cork paid to MacCarthy £40.

Wexford paid to MacMurrough £40.

The Exchequer at Dublin paid to MacMurrough 80 marks.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### *In the Reign of Henry VII.*

Richard III., his character—Relations with the Irish—His death—Henry VII. succeeds him—Lambert Simnel—His reception in Dublin—Supported by the Earl of Kildare—Is crowned King as Edward VI.—Battle of Stoke—Simnel's fate—Sir R. Edgecombe sent to Ireland as Royal Commissioner—Kildare's conduct—Is summoned to England—Dismissed from office—Poynings appointed Viceroy—Parliament at Drogheda—Poynings's Act—Perkin Warbeck in Ireland—Aided by the Earl of Desmond—Kildare in London—Tried—Acquitted—And appointed Viceroy—His energetic measures—The native Irish—In Thomond—and Connaught—and Ulster—Kildare and the Irish chiefs—Battle of Knockdoe.

IN the long line of English Kings there is not one whose memory is more execrated than Richard III. To call a man a hypocrite, a liar, and an assassin is to call him hard names, but in Richard's case these epithets are not undeserved. No one could trust him, no one was in his power with safety ; he sacrificed his friends as readily as his enemies, and spilt the blood of his brother and his nephews for no reason, except that they stood nearer by birth to the throne, which he wished to seize. In him a misshapen body was the outward and appropriate expression of a mind, distorted and diseased. His character has been sketched by Shakespeare with the merciless severity of genius, yet, the picture of the dramatist is hardly more repulsive than that of the historian ; and it is the historian that relates that, after the battle of Bosworth, the body of the dead king was stripped naked, flung contemptuously on a horse's back, and thus carried into Leicester amid the jeers and execrations of the people.\* And such was the rage of the populace, hardly was it allowed the rite of Christian burial.† But if the life and acts of Richard were viewed with abhorrence in England, and his fall welcomed with delight in Ireland, it was different. The

\* Lingard, Vol. IV., p. 127.

† Bacon's *Life of Henry VII.* (*Essays and Historical Works*: Bohn, p. 308.)

dead King was of the House of York, son to that Viceroy whose memory in Ireland was held in such grateful remembrance.\* Of his acts of cruelty in England the Irish knew little; what they did not see or feel, they did not wish to believe; and these vices which excited abhorrence at home, and were seen by the English in all their naked deformity—in Ireland, either were not seen or known at all, or, if they were known, were rendered less repulsive by distance and partiality. Among the Anglo-Irish the Geraldines were then the most powerful, as they had been always the staunchest, supporters of the House of York and during his short reign Richard was careful to cultivate their good will. He had continued Kildare in his office of Lord Deputy, he had augmented his privileges and powers, and he had sent the most flattering letters to the Earl of Desmond, made him many presents,† and called him his cousin, as he did also to Kildare. And thus it happened that the fall of the tyrant was regretted by the Anglo-Irish, and the triumph of Henry VII. was viewed with disgust. They still clung to the Yorkists as the rightful heirs to the throne, regarded Henry Tudor as an usurper, and were ready to champion the claims of those pretenders whose object was to re-establish the fallen fortunes of the house of York, and to hurl the usurping Tudor from his throne.

The first of these pretenders was Lambert Simnel. He was the son of a joiner at Oxford, one Thomas Simnel by name. He was handsome in person, attractive in manner, with an intelligence beyond his years and a dignity of bearing beyond the position in which he was born. These qualities attracted the notice of one Richard Simons, a priest at Oxford, a man doubtless who bore no good-will to the reigning King, and he considered that young Simnel could be got to successfully personate the young Earl of Warwick, then a prisoner in the Tower of London. He took the boy under his care, informed him of the principal events in the life of the prince, carefully taught him what he was to say and do, and when his pupil was fifteen years of age took him with him to Dublin (1487), and proclaimed him there as the Earl of Warwick, son to the Duke of Clarence, who, he said, had escaped from his prison in London.‡ The Lord Deputy was long suspected by Henry

\* Hume's *History of England*. Genealogical Tables.

† Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, pp. 415-19. He sent him through his Councillor, the Bishop of Annadown "a long gown of cloth of gold lined with satin or damask, two doublets—one velvet, one crimson satin, three shirts, three stomachers, three pairs of hose, three bonnets, two hats, two tippets of velvet."

‡ Lingard, Vol. iv., pp. 135-7. Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 425

VII. of disloyalty. To declare for Simnel would be to confirm the worst suspicions of the King, and for a time Kildare held aloof from Simons and his pupil, though his brother, Lord Thomas Fitzgerald, resigned his position as Lord Chancellor to follow the fortunes of the pretender. And the Archbishop of Dublin, the Bishop of Meath, the Prior of Kilmainham and other ecclesiastics and high-placed officials, as well as the citizens of Dublin, followed the Chancellor's example. To prevent the English from becoming his adherents, Henry VII. had the real Earl of Warwick taken from the Tower and marched through London, where he conversed with many, and this prevented some at least from swelling the ranks of Simnel's followers. But others would not be warned. They professed to believe, as did the Anglo-Irish, that Simnel was the real Warwick and the youth who was marched through London only a counterfeit. Among these in England were Sir Thomas Broughton and Lord Lovel, and the Earl of Lincoln,\* but most important of all was the aid given by the Duchess of Burgundy, sister to Richard III. She had, according to Bacon, the spirit of a man and the malice of a woman.† She was a widow and rich, active, scheming, ambitious, mourning over the downfall of the House of York, and ready to help in any movement that would give trouble to the reigning King.‡ She pretended to believe that young Simnel was indeed her nephew, who had but lately escaped from the hands of the royal tyrant. She willingly and eagerly espoused his cause, and fitted up an army of 2,000 under an able leader, Martin Schwartz; and this force landed in Dublin in the early part of the year. At last, Kildare threw off the mask he had worn, boldly pronounced in Simnel's favour, and with the chief citizens of Dublin and the higher officials assembled at Christchurch, on the 24th of May, and the pretender was crowned King by the Bishop of Meath, with the title of Edward VI. || On his head was placed a crown, taken from the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary in St. Mary's Abbey; he was clothed in splendid and costly robes, and after the ceremony a sermon was preached by the Bishop of Meath. On the shoulders of a gigantic Irishman—Darcy of Platten—he was then carried through the city; the people enthusiastically applauded him as he passed, and such was the

\* Lingard, Vol. IV., p. 137. Lincoln had frequently conversed with the real Warwick, and therefore knew Simnel to be an impostor:

† *Henry VII.*, p. 328.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 329. "All the counsels of his succeeding troubles came chiefly out of that quiver." Bacon thinks too that the widow of Edward IV. had a share in these plots as "she was a busy negotiating woman."

|| Gilbert's *Viceroy's*, pp. 428-9,



dignity with which the boy comported himself, that even his enemies declared he did no dishonour to the royal robes which he wore.\* The Archbishops of Armagh, Cashel and Tuam, and the Bishop of Clogher, the Butlers and the city of Waterford alone of all the Anglo-Irish, remained faithful to the House of Tudor; † the remainder supported the pretender. A month after his coronation, he made a descent on the coast of England, at the head of his army of English, Anglo-Irish and Germans, and at Stoke they were encountered (11th June) by Henry VII. himself, with a far more numerous army. The Irish fought bravely, but they fought without armour, ‡ the contest was long maintained, but the result was decisive and for the pretender disastrous. Most of the Irish were slain, so was Schwartz, and greater part of his Germans. The priest, Simons, was taken prisoner and imprisoned in a dark dungeon for life, and Simnel himself was captured and degraded to the menial occupation of turnspit in the King's kitchen.

The English nobles and gentlemen who had fought with Simnel at Stoke were attainted. The Anglo-Irish nobles—Kildare || and the rest—were equally guilty, and Henry had got letters from the Pope excommunicating them. But he went no further than this. They had tried to make to him the best excuses they could and he had accepted these excuses, though he told them he was much displeased, and expected that they would give new and binding pledges of their allegiance, and atone by their loyal conduct of the future for their disloyalty of the past. Patents of pardon were made out, and a special Commissioner, Sir Richard Edgecombe, was sent to Ireland to absolve Kildare and his confederates of their treason, and to receive them into favour with the King.\*\* Leaving Cornwall, with four ships and 500 men, he arrived at Kinsale, on the 27th of June, 1488, and landed on the following day. He was met by the Lords Barry and Courcy, the keys of the town were delivered to him, and these noblemen and the citizens took the oath of allegiance to Henry VII. and received in return the King's pardon for their share in the late rebellion. From

\* Cox. *Hibernia Anglicana*, p. 179. Ware's *Annals*.

† Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 427.

‡ Lingard, Vol. iv., p. 138. The Irish had "darts and skeans." I suspect they had battle axes also, which shows, says Lingard, that the English settlers had adopted the arms of the natives.

|| Bacon (p. 333), is entirely in error in stating that Kildare was at Stoke and was killed there; it was his brother, Lord Thomas Fitzgerald.

\*\* *The Voyage of Sir Richard Edgecombe*, apparently written by Edgecombe himself, in the form of a journal, and included as the *third* of the tracts in Harris's *Hibernica*, pp. 59-77.

Kinsale he made his way to Waterford, where he landed on the first day of July, and where he was enthusiastically received. The Mayor showed him round the city, pointed out the fortifications and brought him into the "Guildhall of the said city," where the city council was assembled. Against the Earl of Kildare the citizens were specially incensed, and the Mayor asked the Commissioner that if the Earl was to be pardoned and continued as Lord Deputy, the city be specially exempt from his jurisdiction. Its effusive loyalty to England was at all times remarkable. The regret of the citizens seemed to be that they were on the wrong side of St. George's Channel; they wished to be part of England, and they made a special request that if they were to be subject to any Viceroy at all and were not to be exempt from his jurisdiction, at least he should be an English lord, for in their eyes that they should be subject to a mere Irishman's rule was not to be borne. Edgecombe was prodigal of promises, and set sail for Dublin, where he was not so enthusiastically received. He lodged at the Dominican Abbey of the Blackfriars, but although the Archbishop of Dublin and others visited him, Kildare did not until a full week had passed. The Commissioner was displeased, and when he met the Deputy was disposed to be stern and haughty and to lecture him on his conduct, but Kildare was in no humour to submit to such rebukes. He was slow to receive Edgecombe at all, he was slow to come to any satisfactory arrangement with him, and although he treated him hospitably at his Castle of Maynooth, he was above all slow to give those binding pledges of good behaviour which the Englishman wished to obtain, and declared, himself and the Council, that if these terms were insisted on "they would become Irish everyone of them." \* The pride of the Commissioner gave way to his prudence, a compromise was arrived at; he was satisfied, or pretended to be satisfied, with Kildare's promises, and that nobleman swore on the Consecrated Host to be henceforth a faithful subject of Henry VII., and never again to countenance any rebellion against his throne. In token of reconciliation Edgecombe hung a gold chain round the Earl's neck. He was continued in the office of Lord Deputy, the sentences of excommunication against ecclesiastics and others were removed, and all those who had aided the pretender and who now submitted were granted the King's pardon, all except the Prior of Kilmainham. †

\* Edgecomb's *Narrative*, p. 65. Harris thinks that the condition sought to be imposed was that they bound themselves to a *forfeiture of their estates*, unless they continued faithful to the King.

† *Ibid.* pp. 67-9.

This treatment of the Anglo-Irish is in marked contrast with that meted out to the English, but it was not that Henry believed them less guilty, nor that he loved them more, but that he feared them more. He was cool, calculating, marching in all his acts with measured tread. His title to the throne was weak, he was not personally popular, the Yorkist party still existed, the fires of discontent smouldered, and if a suitable opportunity were offered would again burst into flame. And just such an opportunity would be offered if matters were pushed to extremes against the Earl of Kildare and his partners in the late rebellion. He had enormous influence with the Anglo-Irish; as the champion of the House of York, he would have still more, for the whole forces of the Anglo-Irish would be with him, except the faction of the Butlers. Nor was it unlikely that the native chiefs also would range themselves on his side. They took little interest, and no share, in the struggle between York and Lancaster, but their good wishes would be with the Yorkists, and, besides, many of them were allied by marriage with the Geraldines. A sister of Kildare's was married to Henry O'Neill of Tirowen, his daughter, Alice, was married to Con O'Neill of the same princely line, his daughter, Eleanor, was married to MacCarthy of Carbery, his daughter, Eustacia, to Burke of Clanrickard, and his son was married to Maeve, daughter of O'Connor of Offaly, while his relative, Desmond, was married to a daughter of O'Brien of Thomond.\* To drive to desperation a man having so many powerful friends would be in the highest degree unwise, and would ill accord with the well-known prudence of King Henry, and so it happened that for the English lords and gentlemen who fought at Stoke there was punishment, but for Kildare and his Irish allies there was pardon and even royal favours.

Peace was thus established in Ireland, and Edgecombe returned to England, but Kildare did not retain the King's favour long. A little later (1490), he was guilty of some acts (what they were is not clear), and again he had to ask and obtain the King's pardon. He received it on condition that he at once repaired to England, so that the King might personally consult with him on Irish affairs. But Kildare was distrustful, perhaps he feared that his past conduct might be remembered and punished, and thinking himself safer in Ireland than in London, he got the Irish Parliament to petition the King that Irish affairs urgently demanded his presence, and would suffer by his absence, and the most profuse protestations were sent on his behalf of his loyalty to the throne.† Excused from

\* Gilbert's *Viceroy's*, pp. 418-424.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 440-2.



going to England, and still continued as Lord Deputy, he was soon mixed up in a quarrel between two members of the Butler family. One of these—Sir Piers—had married Kildare's sister, the other was Sir James. The head of the family—the Earl of Ormond—lived in England, and to manage his Irish estates had appointed Sir James as his deputy, but Sir Piers claimed the position, as the nearest male heir to the Earldom. Kildare espoused the cause of Sir Piers. Sir James was aided by O'Brien of Thomond, the quarrel was long and bitter and, ultimately, Sir James prevailed, and taking his rival captive, threw him into prison, from which he was liberated through the friendly interference of the Earl of Desmond.\* Kildare's connection with these disputes excited the King's displeasure, but his displeasure was intensified when he learned that the Lord Deputy was holding treasonable correspondence with the Scotch and French kings,† that he was in secret league with some of the native chiefs, and that, in violation of all his protestations of loyalty, he was favourable to the latest pretender who had appeared. The Lord Deputy was dismissed from office and Fitzsimons, Archbishop of Dublin, appointed in his place (1492). The new Deputy, assisted by Sir James Desmond,‡ treated Kildare's friends with harshness; Kildare sent messengers to England to explain his conduct and to defend him, but their pleadings were vain, and two royal Commissioners—Wyatt and Garth—were sent over. These Commissioners, aided by Ormond, were guilty of violence against the friends of the fallen Deputy, and even murdered his ally, O'Connor of Offaly. But the Earl was not a safe man to provoke, and seizing Garth (1493), he flung him into prison and sent his son to the scaffold. ||

Tired of ruling Ireland by native Viceroys or Deputies, who used their power only to oppress some rival, Henry at length sent over an Englishman—Sir Edward Poynings—as Lord Deputy.\*\* He landed at Dublin, in October, 1494, and was accompanied by 1,000 soldiers. He was a man of energetic character, and summoning to his aid both Kildare and Sir James Ormond, they proceeded north to chastise O'Donnell of Tirconnell, who, it was said, was in league with the Scotch king. But while proceeding through the territories of O'Hanlon and Magennis, Ormond privately informed him that Kildare was in secret league with O'Hanlon, that the Deputy's life

\* Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 462.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 445-8.

‡ I find him so called by Gilbert, though of course his name was Butler.

|| Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 448.

\*\* Prince Henry, afterwards Henry VIII., was nominally Viceroy, or Lord Lieutenant (*vid.* Ware's List.)

was endangered and plotted against, and that Kildare's brother was already in open revolt and had seized the strongly fortified castle of Carlow.\* The Deputy hastily retraced his steps, abandoned his intended expedition against O'Donnell, and, after recovering with difficulty the castle of Carlow, he summoned a Parliament to meet at Drogheda. It met on the first of December, 1494, and under the Deputy's influence and awed by his presence, the Earl of Kildare was attainted, all royal grants of land, back for 168 years, were revoked, thus reducing the vast majority of the Anglo-Irish to a state of entire dependence on the Crown, no ordnance or great guns were to be kept in any fortress without viceregal licence, Irish war crys, such as Crom Aboo, the war cry of the Fitzgeralds, or Butler Aboo, the war cry of the Ormonds, were prohibited, against coyne and livery specially severe penalties were decreed; and the Statute of Kilkenny was confirmed in its entirety, except that the Irish mode of riding (without saddles), and the use of the Irish language were no longer proscribed.† From this latter it appears that, instead of the Irish having become anglicised, it was the English who had fallen under Irish influences, so much so that the Irish mode of riding without saddles and the use of the Irish tongue were general within the Pale, and it was useless to pass enactments against them.

‡ But the most important enactment of this Parliament was that which became afterwards known as Poyning's Law. By this Act the Parliament of Ireland was made entirely dependent on that of England. It could not even meet without a licence under the great Seal of England, nor could it initiate any legislation, for its statutes should be previously approved by the Viceroy and Irish Privy Council, and then sanctioned by the King and Privy Council of England.‡ Thus did this Parliament, under the influence and terror of an English-born Viceroy, proclaim and enact its own impotence, voluntarily renounce its independence, and, in a spirit of subserviency and cowardice, accept the humiliating position of a legislature without the power to legislate. It was a slavish enactment made by a Parliament of slaves. At the time, its injurious effects were not felt, for the Parliament of that day was only the Parliament of the Pale, nor was it fully representative even of that limited area. It often fell under the influence of some powerful Anglo-Irishman, whose power held it in awe, who filled it with his adherents and had its enactments passed and enforced, not

\* *Viceroy's*, pp. 450-1. Cox, p. 186.

† Ware's *Annals*. Cox, pp. 187-9.

‡ *Ibid.* The Earls of Kildare, Desmond and Ormond were all absent from this Parliament. (Gilbert's *Viceroy's*, p. 451.)

so much for the good of the State as to advance his own personal interests. But when the limits of the Pale were enlarged, and when the Parliament became, not that of a limited area round Dublin, but the Parliament of the whole country and representative of its interests, it was then that the clogging and paralysing influence of Poyning's Law was felt, and that its injurious effects became the theme of eloquent orators and political pamphleteers.

Yet these enactments effected little. The natives became troublesome and had to be bought off and sometimes placated with presents from the Deputy. Sir James Ormond and his soldiers were employed by the government, and as there was no money to pay them, coyne and livery were exacted, but, worst of all, the second of the English pretenders had again appeared in Ireland and had drawn many to his side. By his own friends he was known as Richard of York, son to Edward IV., who had been imprisoned in the Tower of London, and it was thought murdered there by Richard III. The pretender in reality was one Perkin Warbeck, a native of Tournai. The Duchess of Burgundy aided him and called him the "White Rose Prince of England," and when he landed in Munster (1495), he received the active assistance of the Earl of Desmond and of Water, the mayor of Cork. But though the pretender and his allies laid siege to Waterford, they failed to capture that city, and lost many of their soldiers, and Warbeck had to fly to Scotland. To these disorders was added the rebellion of Kildare's son. In revenge for the treatment of his father, he assembled an army and attacked the English (1496),\* nor was Poynings able to resist him, or to adequately protect the loyal English from his assaults.

Disappointed at his Deputy's want of success, Henry had him recalled (1496), and, seeing the difficulty of governing Ireland in spite of the Geraldines, he resolved to call in the assistance of the Earl of Kildare and try if he could not be weaned from his attachment to the Yorkists. After being attainted at Drogheda, he was pursued and harassed by the forces of the government and ultimately was made prisoner (1495), and sent to England and lodged in the Tower of London. He was brought to trial (1496), before the King and his Council, and the Bishop of Meath acted as his accuser.† The charges against him were that he had aided the King's enemies, that he had been in league with O'Hanlon against the Deputy, that

\* Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, pp. 457-9. Ware's *Annals*.

† His name was John Payne, and he it was who had crowned Simne (1487), in Christchurch. Kildare and he were then close personal friends, but ten years later they were bitter enemies. (Ware's *Bishops*.)



he had instigated his brother to take the King's castle at Carlow, and that he had acted in collusion with the King of Scotland and the Earl of Desmond, both of whom were declared enemies of the King.\* These charges were not substantiated, for O'Hanlon swore that he had no connection with him when the Deputy entered his territory, and as to the charges of being in league with the Scotch King and with Desmond, these might furnish matter for suspicion but were incapable of proof.† The impression he made on Henry VII. was favourable, and when the Bishop of Meath declared that all Ireland could not rule the Earl, then, said Henry, "the Earl shall rule all Ireland."‡

While in England, Kildare had married for his second wife Elizabeth St. John, a cousin to Henry VII., and perhaps this smoothed the way for pardon and power. Whatever was the determining cause, he was appointed Lord Deputy and sent back to Ireland, higher than ever in the royal favour, though the King, with his usual prudence, had kept the Earl's son, Gerald, in London, as a hostage for his father's good conduct. The friends of the new Deputy were rejoiced; his enemies, and above all Sir James Ormond, were confounded, Desmond was pardoned for his connection with Perkin Warbeck, and when that pretender again came to Ireland (1497), he got but few to assist him. Desmond kept aloof, and the only prominent Irishman to identify himself with his fortunes was Sir James Ormond, no doubt piqued at the favour shown to Kildare. He was declared an outlaw and soon after was murdered by his kinsman, Sir Piers Butler.|| If Henry had any lingering doubts as to Kildare's loyalty, or as to the wisdom of arming him with such powers, these doubts must have been soon dispelled. The Deputy was not a man<sup>n</sup> of half-measures, and became as enthusiastic in supporting the house of Tudor as he was formerly in opposing it; and such was the vigour of his government that he soon repressed

\* Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 454.

† *Ibid.*, p. 460.

‡ *Book of Howth* (Carew MSS.), 179-80. Cox, p. 191. Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, pp. 460-1. The author of the *Book of Howth* declares that Kildare was but an innocent, half-witted man, and that to this he owed his acquittal. When, for instance, he was charged with burning the church at Cashel, he said yes, but would never have done it, but he thought the Archbishop, his enemy, was inside; when he was told to select a counsellor, he selected the King, and rudely took him by the hand, and instead of attending to his defence he commenced telling stories of the Bishop of Meath, which set the whole Council laughing. This story is adopted and evidently believed by Cox, yet it is very unlikely that Henry VII. would appoint a fool as Lord Deputy, nor did Kildare in that office acquit himself as a fool would.

|| Ware's *Annals*.

disorder and outrage within the Pale. He had enactments passed and enforced that Irish usages were to be discontinued, that the King's subjects within the Pale were to arm and dress in the English fashion, and that whoever rode a horse without a saddle was to forfeit the horse so ridden, and that absentees were to be fined half the income of their estates for the defence of the Pale.\* So pleased was Henry with the loyalty of his Deputy and the energy and success of his government, that he summoned him to London (1503), personally thanked him for all he had done, and appointed his son, Gerald, Lord Treasurer of Ireland, had him married to an English nobleman's daughter, Elizabeth, daughter of Lord Zouch, and, loading him with presents, sent him back to Ireland with his father, "the King's cousin, the Earl of Kildare."†

While, within the Pale, a period of turbulence and weakness was followed by a period of comparative calm, during which something like settled order was maintained under Kildare's vigorous rule, outside of the Pale the old order of discord and turmoil still prevailed. It could not be said that the native chiefs fought more, or quarrelled more, than did their ancestors, but neither could it be said that they quarrelled less. Compared to the north and west, the condition of Thomond during these years was one of peace, but the peace was not continuous. The MacNamaras had some wretched squabble (1486), and "Cumara MacNamara was exultingly slain by the sons of Donogh MacNamara." In the quarrels between the Butlers, the O'Briens had taken part; two MacMahons wrestled with each other for the chieftaincy of their clan (1497); and to increase the miseries that accompanied these disputes a famine decimated the land, and so dreadful in its effects, that the dead were left unburied.‡ In Connaught and Ulster the wars were more persistent and more general, it might be said war was their normal condition. Sometimes the war was between two neighbouring chiefs, each perhaps anxious to humiliate the other, or, perhaps, to avenge some fancied wrong, but the more common form of strife and the most disastrous for the people were those which arose from the strivings of ambitious chiefs, contending for the headship of their clan. The number of these clans was large, they seemed to increase rather than diminish with time, there was no settled order of succession, force alone was the determining factor, the ambition to rule was rarely wanting in more than one member of a chieftain's family; and whenever the chieftain died, his

\* Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, pp. 465-6.

† *Ibid.*, p. 467.

‡ *Four Masters*. White's *History of Clare*, p. 151.

place was contended for by angry, and often ferocious, disputants. So fruitful a source of strife was this that the *Four Masters* record, at 1488, that in Oriel two MacMahons were fighting, two MacDonoghs in Tirerill, two O'Connors and two O'Neills,\* and, in the next year, two O'Farrells, were contending for the petty chieftaincy of Annally. Both Tirconnell and Tirowen were ruled by able and restless chiefs who often fought, for the old rivalry still continued in all its bitterness. In 1490, the O'Neills and O'Donnells were at war; in the next year the quarrel was renewed; they were again at war (1497); and the last year of the dying century saw the quarrel resumed.† During these years, that same O'Donnell was at war with Maguire (1490), with O'Connor Roe (1495), and two years later, he sought to chastise MacDermott of Moylurg. It is unnecessary to add that the O'Connors quarrelled, as they never agreed. The Burkes had now become as quarrelsome and were far more powerful, and such were the miseries they caused that the *Annals* record that Burke invaded the territory of O'Connor Roe (1495), and that he destroyed everything that O'Donnell in that year had not destroyed. The jackal had followed in the lion's path. Famine and pestilence followed in the track of war, and the people ate "such food as was not fit to be mentioned or was never served on dishes for human food.‡ So disgusted was one of the O'Donnell chiefs at the quarrels of his sons that he resigned the headship of the clan (1497), but the rebuke was forgotten, and four years later they were again at war. In the next year (1502) there was war between Burke of Clanrickard and O'Kelly of Hy-Many.

In many of these quarrels Kildare interfered. Since 1496, when he was last appointed Deputy, he was enthusiastically loyal to Henry VII., but he was loyal on his own terms and in his own peculiar way, for while he strove to anglicise the Pale and prohibited Irish habits and customs, he was more than half Irish himself. He spoke Irish, levied coyne and livery, practised fosterage, and his alliance by marriage with the Irish chiefs were many. Like many others of the Anglo-Irish, if he had something in common with the English, he had much more in common with the Irish; and if he interfered in the disputes that arose it was because he felt as an Irish chief himself, with

\* And two O'Rourkes, two MacDermots and two O'Haras (*Four Masters* at 1488.)

† *Four Masters*. It was during these years that O'Neill claimed rent from O'Donnell, being, as he thought, his superior, and the demand and the reply are equally laconic. "Send me my rent (said O'Neill) or else——" "I owe none (said O'Donnell), and if I did——". Leland, Vol. II., p. 91.

‡ *Ibid.*, 1497. *O'Connors of Connaught*, p. 170.



the same quickness to take offence and the same talent for war, because sometimes his personal interests were concerned, and because, perhaps, in his zeal for his royal master, he desired to use these disputes for the weakening of Irish and for the extension of English power. Acting on behalf and probably at the instigation of O'Connor Don, he marched into Connaught (1499), defeated O'Kelly of Hy-Many, from whom he took the castle of Athleague, then turned against O'Connor Roe, from whom he took the castles of Tusk, Roscommon and Castlerea, took hostages from these chiefs and then, handing over hostages and castles to O'Connor Don, he marched back to Dublin.\* A little before this he had unsuccessfully attacked the O'Briens of Thomond, and a few years later (1503), he led an army into Antrim and destroyed the castle of Belfast.†

In the following year, he led an expedition into Connaught and fought one of the most remarkable battles in Irish history. Burke of Clanrickard had quarrelled with his neighbour, O'Kelly of Hy-Many, had entered his territory and taken possession of his castles of Monivea, Garbally and Castleblakeny, and O'Kelly, unable to resist him, appealed for assistance to Kildare. About the same time Burke had attacked and captured the town of Galway, a violation of the charter given to that town by which the Burkes were specifically prohibited from entering there without the leave of the municipality.‡ This latter act afforded a good pretext to the Deputy to listen to O'Kelly's appeal, and he was the more willing to attack Burke as his daughter was married to that nobleman and had been treated ill.|| But Burke was a formidable foe with great resources at his command, and his strength was augmented by the aid of O'Brien of Thomond, MacNamara and O'Carroll of Ely. To beat down this combination Kildare mustered the whole strength of the Pale, and besides, procured the assistance of O'Connor Roe, MacDermott and the Burkes of Mayo from Connaught, of Magennis, MacMahon, O'Hanlon and O'Reilly from the north, of O'Farrel of Annally, O'Reilly of Cavan, and O'Connor of Offaly, but, most important of all, of O'Donnell of Tirconnell.\*\* With this latter chief he had been sometimes at war, but recently he had sent one of his sons to be fostered in Tirconnell, and to this, perhaps, may be due their present alliance. It may also explain the absence of Kildare's kinsman, O'Neill, who would

\* *O'Conors of Connaught*, p. 170.

† Ware's *Annals*.

‡ Hardiman's *History of Galway*, p. 69. The Charter granted by Richard III. bears date, 15th December, 1484.

|| Leland's *History*, Vol. II., p. 116.

\*\* *Four Masters*.

be reluctant to fight side by side with his old antagonist of Tirconnell, and, it may be, felt piqued at the friendship shown him by Kildare. The numbers who fought on each side have not been ascertained, but the advantage of arms and armour was on the side of the Deputy,\* for the main reliance of the other side was in the battle-axe.† Kildare and his allies marched towards Galway, but Burke had retired north-west, and at a place but three or four miles from one of his castles at Clare-Galway, he took up a position on the low hill of Knockdoe. The *Book of Howth*‡ gives, with tedious minuteness, the debates and discourses in Kildare's camp previous to the battle, in which the ecclesiastics and learned men who accompanied the army are spoken of with contempt. O'Connor of Offaly declared that he never saw those who were learned give good counsel in matters of war, and that what would be decided in the coming fight was to be decided by valiant and stout stomachs of prudent and wise men of war practised in the same faculty, and not by men practised in matters of law nor matters of religion. And if he spoke these words, he spoke the truth, for in most wars both justice and religion are ignored and those who fight think little of either. After a hard fought struggle, which lasted the entire day, the Deputy was the victor. His loss was considerable,|| but the loss of his opponents was greater, being at least 2000 men. The victors encamped for the night on the field which they had won, then marched to Galway, captured the town, also captured Athenry, took two sons and a daughter of Burke as prisoners, and then Kildare regaled his troops with 30 tuns of wine.\*\*

To make alliances with Irish chiefs, and, above all, to make war in a private quarrel without the express leave of the King was contrary to many enactments and ought therefore be condemned by Henry VII., and doubtless it would if Kildare had failed. But he had succeeded, and flushed with victory he sent a glowing account to London, that his majesty's enemies were destroyed. Nothing suited Henry's plans better than to

\* They had firearms and probably cannon, as some musket balls and a cannon ball were found in later times on the battle-field. (*Four Masters*, O'Donovan's Note.)

† Gilbert's *Viceroy's*, p. 469. The name of the battlefield signifies "the hill of the axes."

‡ pp. 181-185.

|| Ware's *Annals*. The *Book of Howth* gives Burke's loss at 9,000, Ware's estimate is 2,000. Cox (p. 197), quoting from the *White Book of the Exchequer*, says not one Englishman was killed. The veracity of that *White Book* is on a par with that of the *Book of Howth*.

\*\* Cox, p. 197. The *Book of Howth* says that Lord Gormanstown after the battle suggested that, having killed most of the *Irish* opposed to them, they should now cut the throats of the Irish on their own side.

see the Irish fighting among themselves. It meant a weakening of their strength, and would make the task of subduing the whole country all the easier. And instead of being displeased with Kildare he highly extolled him, invested him with the Order of the Garter and continued him in the office of Deputy for the remainder of his reign.\* For similar reasons he must have been well pleased that the O'Neills and O'Donnells renewed their quarrels (1507), that MacMahon and Maguire were at war (1508), and that in the same year the MacCarthys in the South were similarly engaged.†

\* Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, p. 472.

† *Four Masters*.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### *The Geraldines.*

Henry VIII and Ireland—Kildare continued as Deputy—His war with O'Brien and Burke—Battle of Monabrahir—Kildare's last years and death—His son Gerald—The new Earl appointed Deputy—His difficulties—Accused and went to England—Re-appointed Deputy—His enemies in Ireland—Lord Surrey appointed Viceroy—Submission of the native chiefs—His plan for the subjugation of the country—Leaves for England—Earl of Ormond appointed Deputy—Kildare in England—Returns to Ireland—His quarrels with Ormond—Royal Commission appointed—Ormond dismissed—Succeeded by Kildare—His troubles—Wars between O'Neill and O'Donnell—The Earl of Desmond—Kildare summoned to London and tried on various charges; His encounter with Wolsey—Ormond made Earl of Ossory, and appointed Lord Deputy—Sir William Skeffington Viceroy—Kildare returns to Ireland—O'Donnell and the Connaught chiefs—Kildare again Deputy—Has quarrels with Ossory—Summoned to London on various charges.

IN the early years of his reign, Henry VIII. paid little attention to Ireland. Young, handsome, accomplished, skilled in martial exercises, he passed much of his time in the midst of balls and revels and court pageants,\* and in such amusements spent with a prodigal hand a large part of these treasures which had been laboriously and patiently collected by his father's avarice. His grandmother, the Countess of Richmond, still lived, and the sensible advice she gave him was to retain in his service those ministers who had been tried and trusted in the preceding reign. Henry had the good sense to accept the advice and act upon it, and, in the same spirit and acting under these minister's directions, he continued Kildare in his office of Lord Deputy and he invited him to London, so that he might consult with him on Irish affairs. But Kildare was reluctant to go, and at his suggestion the Irish Council requested of the King that he be excused from going. The Earls of Desmond and Ormond sent a joint letter to England urging the same, declaring that they were themselves at enmity with the Lord Burke of Connaught and that their

\* Lingard, Vol. iv., p. 170.

hope was that the Deputy would make peace between them.\* These two noblemen, perhaps, wrote what they believed, but Kildare's talents and dispositions were not for peace, and, relieved from the necessity of going to England, he soon proceeded to make war. With all the forces of the Pale he marched into South Munster, captured the castles of Duhallow and Kanturk (in Cork) and two other castles (in Kerry), then marching north to Limerick he was joined by MacCarthy and the Earl of Desmond and with him also was O'Donnell of Tirconnell. The Deputy, it seems, expected that he would finish the work begun at Knockdoe, that O'Brien of Thomond would be crushed and then the subjugation of Burke of Clanrickard would be an easy matter. Marching on Limerick that city was soon captured† and from this, as his headquarters, he advanced as far as Castleconnell, where a bridge across the Shannon connected East and West Thomond. He broke down the bridge so as to prevent the whole forces of Thomond from acting together. O'Brien meanwhile was not idle. He had got together the Dalcassian clans, Burke of Clanrickard was also with him with all his forces, and these chiefs were eager to avenge the disaster at Knockdoe. Their army was encamped on the Clare side of the Shannon, not far from Castleconnell, and when the bridge was broken down they advanced further down the river, which they forded, and made preparations for attacking the enemy. Miscalculating the strength and vigour of his foes, Kildare, instead of fighting, commenced to retreat towards Limerick, but was followed up by O'Brien and at Monabrahir, near Limerick, the battle was fought. It lasted throughout the day, and Kildare and his allies were defeated with great loss; they were hotly pursued on their retreat and were saved from extinction only by the skill with which O'Donnell and his troops defended the rear of the army. The Deputy made his way back to Dublin as best he could, and did not again attempt the conquest of Thomond, or the subjugation of O'Brien's allies.‡ Two years later, Kildare was again active, and entering Connaught he captured the Castle of Roscommon, which he garrisoned in the name of the King. That same year he went north, devastated the lands of the MacDonnells of Antrim and captured the castle of Belfast,|| and in the following year he again went south, laying waste much of South Munster. The territory of O'Carroll of Ely he treated similarly, though O'Carroll's strong castle of Leap defied all his efforts, and, mortified at his failure to

\* *Calendar of State Papers* (1509-73). (Hamilton), p. 1.

† *Ware's Annals. Four Masters*, 1510.

‡ *White's History of Clare*, pp. 164-5.

|| *Four Masters. Ware's Annals*.

capture it, he was returning to Dublin (1513), when he fell ill on his march and died at Athy.\*

The Irish Privy Council selected the young Earl of Kildare, son to the deceased Earl, as Deputy, and the appointment was in a short time sanctioned by Letters Patent from the King. Like his father, the new Deputy was a man of energetic and warlike character, and the year after his appointment he marched into Breffni, laid that territory waste, and killed its chief O'Reilly,† then he turned his arms against O'Toole of Wicklow, whom he defeated. Finally, marching into Ely O'Carroll and in alliance with Sir Piers Butler, he attacked O'Carroll, laid his country waste and with heavy guns which he had brought from Dublin he captured the castle of Leap, which his father had formerly besieged in vain.‡ These energetic proceedings indicated that Kildare was zealous in the cause of the English King, for in crushing the Irish chiefs he was interpreting accurately the royal will. Yet the condition of English power was feeble, and the Archbishop of Armagh, writing to his friend Wolsey, the Bishop of Lincoln, described the perilous position of the Pale. And to increase the Deputy's embarrassment and lessen, if not destroy his influence with the King, his stepmother, the Dowager Countess of Kildare, complained|| that Kildare was partial to the great O'Neill and had voted him a tribute out of her lands, that he had allowed some of the lands of her sons to fall into the hands of the wild Irish, and that the lands of Kilbride, belonging to her ward, one Rochefort, were made waste by oppression of coyne and livery.

To answer these and perhaps other charges made against him, Kildare proceeded to England (1515), and seems to have triumphed over his accusers, as he came back continued in his office of Lord Deputy. His enemies were discomfited, but their discomfiture was not final nor complete. The place-hunter whose expectations had not been fulfilled, the adventurer whose greed had been restrained, the lawless whose turbulence had been repressed and whose offences had been punished, the arrogant whose pride had been humbled and whose vanity had been hurt—all these regarded Kildare's power with jealousy, and, convinced that they had a grievance against himself or his father, watched for an opportunity to do him harm. Their ranks were increased by an important and powerful recruit in the person of Sir Piers Butler, now Earl of Ormond. He was married to Kildare's sister

\* Ware's *Annals Four Masters*; at 1514, it should be 1513.

† *Ibid.*, 1514.

‡ *Ibid.*, 1516. *Four Masters*.

|| Hamilton's *Calendar*, p. 2. The Archbishop's letter was written in 1514, that of the Countess, early in 1516.



hitherto they had been on friendly terms, and in the war against O'Carroll they fought side by side. But that was in the days when he was Sir Piers Butler; the seventh Earl of Ormond had died in London (1515), Sir Piers, as the next male heir, was entitled to the Earldom and its vast estates, and in possession of such honours and wealth he was lifted to an equality with his brother-in-law and resented his assumption of superiority. Perhaps also in the settlement of the Ormond estates, which had been referred by the King to his Deputy and carried out by him, the new Earl of Ormond\* felt aggrieved, and in his consequent enmity to Kildare he was incited by his ambitious wife. Clever, restless, overbearing, with the strong will of the Geraldines, she was zealous in her own impetuous fashion for the advancement of Ormond's influence and power, ready to spare no effort and use every means to attain her ends, and had no objection, if it were necessary, that Ormond should rise even on the ruins of Kildare. Her husband she found a suitable medium for her purpose. His character was in striking contrast to that of the Lord Deputy, for while Kildare was open, blunt, outspoken, with the warrior's plainness of speech, Ormond, on the contrary, was underhand, subtle and intriguing, not destitute of courage, but with talents rather for diplomacy than for war. He was able to ingratiate himself with Wolsey, the all-powerful minister of Henry VIII., and to poison his mind against Kildare. The ground being thus prepared, the Deputy was charged that he was in secret league with the Irish, that he was enriching himself with the revenues of the Crown and that he was guilty of "seditious practices, conspiracies and subtle drifts."† A new Viceroy was sent to Ireland (1520), in the person of the Earl of Surrey, Kildare was dismissed from office, and had to hasten to England to defend himself against the offences laid to his charge.

The new Viceroy was son to that Earl of Surrey who had fought and won the battle of Flodden; he himself had been with his father in the battle and contributed his share to the victory gained;‡ and he was not long in Ireland until he exhibited that energy and skill which he had displayed on the field of Flodden. The northern boundary of the Pale lay near

\* He was not recognised formally as Earl by the King until 1522, when he was appointed Deputy, and as late as 1520 is called Sir Piers Butler by Henry VIII., but he was the heir to the vacant Earldom, and must, at least by courtesy, have received the title. (*State Papers*—Henry VIII., Vol. II., pp. 34-39.)

† *State Papers* (Henry VIII.), Vol. II., pp. 32-3.

‡ Lingard, Vol. IV., pp. 181-2. He was then Lord Thomas Howard—his father was created Duke of Norfolk, and he received the father's former title of Earl of Surrey.

the lands of O'Neill and MacMahon and was harassed by their incessant attacks and these two chiefs were the first whom he assailed. MacMahon's district of Oriel he soon laid waste and compelled its chief to submit, but Con O'Neill, thinking it more prudent not to meet him in the open and stake all on a single battle, retired into the mountains and woods of his province whither the Viceroy was unable to follow, and, disappointed at his failure, he returned to Dublin. Before the year had expired, and while he was meditating an attack on O'Neill, that chieftain came to Dublin voluntarily and formally submitted to him and to the English king. He made the most ample professions of good behaviour for the future and when Henry was informed of this he was so pleased that he sent O'Neill a collar of gold.\* O'Donnell also had in the meantime come to Dublin, was even more profuse in his professions of loyalty to England and in the true spirit of an Irish chief, anxious above all to injure a rival, he secretly informed the Viceroy that O'Neill had urged him to make war on the English and that he had given that advice, acting under the influence and at the suggestion of the Earl of Kildare.† Satisfied with the turn affairs had taken in Ulster, Surrey then turned his attention south and entered and laid waste the districts of O'More of Leix, O'Carroll of Ely, and O'Connor of Offaly. Combined, these chieftains might have offered a stout resistance, but they did not combine, and fighting separately their resistance was futile and they had no alternative but to submit.‡ The last of these chiefs to submit was MacCarthy of Carbery, who made a favourable impression on the Viceroy, and whose good sense and intelligence and evident sincerity he highly extolled in his letter to Wolsey.|| But Surrey was not deceived by these submissions and had little faith in their permanence. He knew they were extorted by necessity and that these chiefs, tenacious of their independence, would continue to be submissive only as long as they were awed by superior force. He knew that these submissions were very different from conquest, he was convinced that the conquest of the country was necessary, if England wished to establish her power effectively, but he knew that to crush all these chiefs would be no easy matter, and he proposed that 6,000 men be sent from England and that the various chiefs be simultaneously attacked\*\*. His proposals

\* *State Papers*, Vol. II., p. 56.

† *Ibid.*, p. 37.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 57.

¶ \*\* *Ibid.*, pp. 72-75. (Letter from Surrey to Henry VIII.) When so attacked he thinks the Irish would suspend their own quarrels and, besides would be aided by three or four thousand "Irish Scots."

were sent to England but were not adopted; the money he had asked for the expenses of the Irish government was not even sent,\* the native chiefs became again restive; Ormond and Desmond, who had often quarrelled and whom he had with difficulty reconciled, were again quarrelling; and MacCarthy and Desmond had gone to war and a battle had been fought between them, at Mourne Abbey, in Cork, where Desmond was defeated and 1,000 of his army slain.† Discouraged and disappointed at these events, sick in body and in mind, Surrey begged to be recalled from Ireland, and at length (1521), his request was complied with, and he left for England, appointing the Earl of Ormond as Lord Deputy.

By this time Kildare was more than two years in England. The charges against him were referred to Cardinal Wolsey; the Cardinal was prejudiced against him‡ and this prejudice had been intensified by fresh charges and reports made both by Ormond and Surrey.|| But it is easier to make charges than to prove them, and the charges against Kildare had not been proved true, and Wolsey was too great a man to be guided altogether by prejudice, or to confound certainty with mere suspicion. He did not—he could not, consistently with justice—condemn the late Deputy, nor did he commit him to prison, but he was prevented from going to Ireland, as it was thought that his influence there would not be in the direction of peace, nor would he be likely to assist a Viceroy who took so many of his inspirations from Ormond. But there was no other restraint imposed upon him. He mixed in society, he attended at Court and was among the King's retinue at that famous meeting with the French King on the Field of the Cloth of Gold.\*\* About that date Kildare married his second wife, Lady Elizabeth Grey, a relative of the King. This alliance gave him powerful friends. He became a man of power and influence at Court, a man whom it would be unsafe to attack. His accusers ceased to accuse, slander and malignity held their tongues, there were no more charges, or even insinuations against him, and he was allowed, without let or hindrance, to go back to Ireland (1523).

He soon commenced to quarrel with Ormond, and he had many reasons to complain of his conduct. Ormond had used his power as Deputy with harshness and severity, and had

\* *State Papers*, p. 90. Henry VIII. thought that to send such moneys would be "frustration and consumption of treasure in vain."

† Meehan's *Geraldines*, pp. 48-9. Ware's *Annals*.

‡ *Campion's History*, p. 162. Cox, p. 209.

|| *State Papers*, p. 45. He went to great lengths to get O'Carroll give evidence against Kildare.

\*\* Cox, p. 210.



especially harassed all those who were known to be friendly to Kildare. Contrary to so many enactments, he had exacted coyne and livery within the Pale itself and from the King's subjects. He had so irritated the neighbouring chiefs that his oppressions could hardly be borne, and Magillapatrik of Ossory had sent a special envoy to Henry VIII. to solemnly warn him, that if he did not chastise his Deputy, he himself would declare war against the King. The solemn manner and lofty tone assumed by the envoy of a petty chief has excited the ridicule of historians, but such an embassy shows that under Ormond's vexatious rule the limits of endurance had been passed.\* Kildare was not slow to send all the charges he could make against his rival to England; his rival retorted; there were charges and countercharges; and at length a Royal Commission was appointed by the English Privy Council to proceed to Ireland and examine into these charges on the spot.† They did so, and either the justice of Kildare's cause or the influence of his friends prevailed. Ormond was dismissed from office (1524) and, to deepen his humiliation, Kildare was appointed in his place.‡

On resuming the office of Lord Deputy, after an interval of more than four years, the outlook before him was not promising. Ormond, humiliated, degraded and embittered, was not disposed to make the way of government easy for his successful rival, but instead was much more likely to throw every obstacle in his path and to use any mistakes he might make for his ultimate ruin. The chiefs nearing the Pale—O'More, O'Connor and O'Carroll—who had submitted to Surrey through necessity and with reluctance, were not disposed to be equally compliant with Kildare; and as he was related by blood to the two latter they might hope with some reason, that any violation of their promise to Surrey might be easily condoned. The Earl of Desmond was master of great resources. He was little more than nominally a subject of England, considered himself an independent prince and, in the manner of such, corresponded with continental monarchs. But from nobody did the Deputy experience more trouble than from the rulers of Tirconnell and Tirowen.

O'Donnell had gone to Rome (1512) on a pilgrimage, but no sooner had he returned than he discarded the pilgrim's staff for the sword and that same year he was at war with his neighbour,

\* Leland, Vol. II., p. 133. The envoy met the King, as he was going to his devotions. "Sta pedibus (he said). Domine Rex, Dominus meus me misit ad te et jussit dicere quod si non vis castigare Petrum Rufum (Piers Butler), ipse faciet bellum contra te."

† *State Papers*, p. 105. The Commissioners arrived in Ireland about midsummer, 1524.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 115: Kildare was appointed, in August, 1524.

O'Neill, and also with Burke of Connaught. The next year he was in correspondence with the King of Scotland, who purposed making a descent on Ireland, but the fate of Bruce must have warned O'Donnell, and he dissuaded James IV. from his designs.\* Three years later he attacked O'Connor Roe. He had previously tried in vain to take O'Connor's fortified castle of Sligo, but a French knight, who had been on a pilgrimage to Lough Derg and was hospitably treated by O'Donnell, sent him a ship armed with heavy guns and with this Sligo castle was attacked from the sea and captured.† The same year O'Donnell and O'Neill were at war. In these wars with Tirowen it has been said that O'Donnell was generally the aggressor,‡ but in 1522, in the war between them of that year, the aggressor was O'Neill. He made his preparations with secrecy and care, strengthened himself by an alliance with all the Connaught chiefs—Clanrickard, the O'Connors, Burke of Mayo and MacDermott, got the aid even of O'Brien of Thomond, sought and obtained the help of his own Ulster chiefs—Magennis, MacMahon and O'Reilly—and had a contingent of English mercenaries from Leinster, who came to help "the son of the Earl's daughter,"|| for Con O'Neill was a grandson of an Earl of Kildare. Against such forces it seemed vain for O'Donnell to contend, but he was not dismayed. He called together his own chieftains of Tirconnell—O'Boyle, O'Doherty, the MacSweenys and O'Gallagher—told them he would rather die fighting than surrender his freedom to O'Neill, and to that chieftain's peremptory summons to submit, he sent him back defiance and bade him do his worst. Without waiting for his allies of Munster and Connaught, O'Neill despatched a contingent into Tirconnell and captured the castle of Ballyshannon which was bravely defended by MacSweeny, and then he laid waste the surrounding country. O'Donnell, on his side, was not idle and despatched his son, Manus, to devastate Tirowen. This had the desired effect, for O'Neill's army was withdrawn from Tirconnell and while awaiting his allies his whole army encamped on the Hill of Knockvoe, overlooking the town of Strabane. O'Donnell had marched south to intercept the enemy and if possible to save Ballyshannon, but he was late, and being now joined by his son, Manus, returning from Tirowen, he marched north, through the gap of Barnsmore, and advancing along the banks of the River Finn, pitched his camp not far from O'Neill, a little north of the town of Lifford. In numbers he

\* *Four Masters.*

† *Ibid.*, 1516.

‡ *Haverty's History of Ireland*, p. 347.

|| *Four Masters.*

was far inferior to O'Neill, but he was his superior in skill and daring, and while yet the forces of Connaught and Munster had not reached Tirowen he resolved to make a night attack on O'Neill's camp. He did so and with the most complete success. O'Neill was defeated, lost 900 men in the engagement, many of his best leaders, and great quantities of armour, provisions, and "strong liquors" fell into O'Donnell's hands\*. Emboldened by his victory, O'Donnell marched south to measure swords with the forces of Munster and Connaught, but the news of his victory went before him and filled his enemies with dismay. They hastily raised the siege of Sligo, which they had been trying to capture, and without waiting to encounter the victorious Northern they returned home.† The next year O'Donnell entered Tirowen and desolated the whole country, "burned its edifices and corn, and left nothing worth notice in it without burning."‡ Continuing these quarrels, O'Neill and O'Donnell were again at war in the next year, and on this occasion the Deputy with his forces marched to O'Neill's assistance, but he was desirous to establish peace between them, for he was friendly to both. He brought them together in conference and succeeded in reconciling them, becoming himself security for the terms of agreement. And Kildare formed gossipred with O'Donnell. In defiance of this agreement the two Northerners were at war again next year. Again the Deputy strove to reconcile them and had a conference in Dublin for the purpose, but it proved abortive and they went home and went to war, though they shortly afterwards made peace.||

These events tried the patience as they tested the prudence of Kildare, nor was it certain that his share in them would meet with approval in England. Both O'Neill and O'Donnell had submitted to Lord Surrey and promised to be loyal subjects of England, but their conduct since was little in harmony with that of well-disposed subjects. And the enemies of Kildare noted that he continued to be friendly with both these chiefs, whose turbulence had set the country ablaze, that he was prepared at one time to lend the forces of the Crown to enable one of them to triumph over his foe, that, in defiance of many parliamentary enactments, he had formed with O'Donnell the tie of gossipred, and that when he was inaugurated as Lord Deputy, the Sword of State was borne by O'Neill.\*\* Nor was this all. During these years the relations between England and France were

\* *Four Masters.*

† *Ibid. and Annals of Loch Ce.*

‡ *Ibid.*, 1523.

|| *Four Masters.*

\*\* Cox, p. 214.



strained, and as part of the game of politics, Francis I. meditated a descent upon Ireland, and for that purpose entered into negotiations with the Earl of Desmond. The insular simplicity of the Irishman did not understand the motives of French policy, for Francis was not thinking of Irish freedom, and was concerned only to curb and restrain Henry's continental activity by furnishing him with some trouble nearer home. Desmond's vanity was flattered and he showed a readiness to second the efforts of the French king. His conduct did not escape the vigilance and the malignity of Ormond. His treason was quickly made known in London, and forthwith peremptory orders were sent to the Deputy to proceed to Munster and arrest as a traitor the offending Earl. Without delay Kildare proceeded south to execute the orders he had got, but Desmond, by retreating into the mountains, managed to elude arrest, and the Deputy was compelled to return to Dublin without being able to carry out his orders.\* His enemies reported that he was lukewarm and insincere in the King's service, that he was in collusion with Desmond and had sent him friendly warning beforehand, and that to this Desmond's escape was due. To be guilty of being in collusion with a traitor was a crime of the gravest nature, to be suspected of it was serious and at least required investigation, and once again Kildare had to proceed to London (1526), and answer the following charges—that he had neglected to arrest Desmond, that he had contracted affinity with "Irish enemies," that he had hanged certain good subjects, and that he had conspired with O'Neill and O'Connor to make an inroad into Ormond's territory. On these charges he was lodged a prisoner in the Tower.†

The accused Deputy was not brought to trial at once, though many efforts were made against him by his enemies, and so many of the prominent men of the Pale went to England, that the English Council directed the Archbishop of Armagh to remain in Ireland, as otherwise all the great men of Ireland would be in England.‡ At length, when Ormond and his friends had completed their preparations and believed they were able to effect the late Deputy's ruin, he was brought before Wolsey and the English Council to be tried. Wolsey's prejudices against the accused had grown with time. He was placed in the position of judge, to act only on the evidence and to convict only when the charges made were satisfactorily proved; but his conduct at the trial was rather that of an embittered

\* Cox, p. 215.

† Ware's *Annals*, 1526.

‡ Hamilton's *Calendar of State Papers*, p. 5:

partisan than of an impartial judge. Instead of leaving to others the work of accusation he became accuser himself, though he felt he owed an apology to the Council for doing so. He charged him that though his friend Desmond was in treasonable correspondence with Francis I. of France, and afterwards with the Emperor Charles V., yet he would not arrest him as a traitor, but when sent to do so wilfully shunned his sight, altered his course, warned his friends. He taunted him that if he had but lost a cow or garron of his own, two hundred kerns would have come at his whistle to recover the prey from the uttermost edge of Uister. He calls him not so much the Earl of Kildare as the King of Kildare, tells him that he reigns over the land rather than rules it, that where he is malicious the truest subjects stand for Irish enemies, and where he is pleased the Irish enemy stands for a dutiful subject. Kildare had not an angel's patience, the limits of his endurance had been passed, and with difficulty he restrained himself while the Cardinal spoke. Then he rose angrily to reply. As to Desmond he protests he did his duty, and to the charge that he forewarned him he indignantly replies by asking who was the messenger by whom the warning was sent, if it was sent by letter, where was the letter—his servants and friends are ready to be examined, why not examine them, and where is the justice of relying solely on what his enemies say, on their base words, their heedless hearsays, their frantic oaths. His last words were for the Cardinal and must have nettled him not a little. "As touching my kingdom, my Lord (he said), I would you and I had exchanged kingdoms but for one month, I would trust to gather up more crumbs in that space than twice the revenues of my poor Earldom. I sleep in a cabin when you lie soft on your bed of down, I serve under the cope of Heaven when you are served under a canopy, I drink water out of a shell when you drink out of golden cups, my courser is trained to the field when your jennet is taught to amble." These unpleasant truths, all the more unpleasant because they were true, Wolsey heard with anger, though there were many at the Council who were glad to hear them, for Wolsey had many enemies and scarce any friends. But though Kildare was acquitted of conniving at Desmond's escape the charge that he had urged O'Neill and O'Connor to attack the Earl of Ormond was not so easily disposed of: he was in fact found guilty of this and sent back a prisoner to the Tower. And Wolsey sent an order to the governor to have him executed, but appeal was made to King Henry in person, and Wolsey's order was not carried out.\*

\* Campion's *History of Ireland*, pp. 164-72: Cox, pp. 219-20:

The state of Ireland in the meantime went from bad to worse. When leaving for England Kildare had left as his Deputy his relative—Sir James Fitzgerald,—but, probably because he *was* his relative, he was soon dismissed and Lord Delvin appointed in his place (1526).<sup>\*</sup> In collusion with O'Carroll of Ely, and as it appeared at the instigation of Kildare, O'Connor of Offaly made an attack on the Pale, and Delvin, who sought to chastise his insolence, attacked him with all the forces he could muster, but was defeated and taken prisoner. Nor was it until after protracted negotiations, much delay and the payment of a ransom that O'Connor allowed him to go free. The Archbishop of Dublin and Birmingham, the Lord Chief Justice, had already warned Wolsey of Delvin's incapacity and they suggested that Kildare be sent back; † other influences were at work to have Ormond appointed Deputy, while the Duke of Norfolk attributed all the ills of the Pale to the quarrels between Kildare and Ormond, and remonstrated against the appointment of either. ‡ But his remonstrance was unheeded. Ormond was now in high favour with the King. His relative, Mary Boleyn, had been the King's mistress and her sister Anne had succeeded her in the same degraded position, and had unbounded influence over her royal paramour. At the King's suggestion and request, Ormond had resigned his Earldom, which was conferred on Anne Boleyn's father, Sir Thomas Boleyn, who thus became Earl of Ormond,|| while the Sir Piers Butler of other days became Earl of Ossory and Lord Deputy (1528), and his son, Sir James Butler, was appointed Lord Treasurer of Ireland. Yet, though in such high favour with the King, and having large resources at his command, Ossory did not succeed. He was not personally popular in Ireland, either with native or English-born. Among the higher officials in the Pale Kildare had many friends, and his relatives among the Irish chiefs would take care to give trouble to the man who had so patiently and so perseveringly plotted Kildare's ruin. At length the wisdom and policy of Norfolk's\*\* advice was recognised, Ossory was set aside (1529), and the government was placed in the hands of an Englishman—Sir William Skeffington. With him there came, though given no official position, the exiled Earl of Kildare. His old enemy

\* Ware's *Annals*.

† *State Papers* (Henry VIII), pp. 126-7.

‡ This was the Earl of Surrey of former days. He was Duke of Norfolk since 1524.

|| Carte's *Ormond*—Introduction, p. 45.

\*\* Norfolk had declared that the malice between the Earls of Kildare and Ossory was the only cause of the ruin of that poor land. (*State Papers*, p. 134—Letter to Wolsey.)



Wolsey, was now fallen and disgraced ; it became the fashion to honour those whom he had sought to dishonour ; the Earl of Desmond was dead and could no longer intrigue with either emperor or king ; and there could be no object gained by keeping Kildare in England. And it was expected that in Ireland he would second the efforts of Skeffington and help to re-establish the authority of the crown.

At first all went well. Con O'Neill of Tirowen had harassed the Pale by his attacks ; it was necessary to punish him ; for that purpose an army was mustered ; and the unusual spectacle was seen of Kildare and Ossory marching together under the Deputy's command to lay waste the lands of Tirowen. With them also, on this expedition (1531), was O'Donnell of Tirconnell. Since the year in which he had won the victory of Knockvoe, and chased the Munstermen and Connaughtmen from Sligo, he laid claim to be the over-lord of Connaught and obtained tribute from its chiefs. But either his exactions or his insolence became unbearable and a confederacy was formed for his overthrow (1526), in which O'Connor and MacDonogh, and MacDermot joined and afterwards Burke and Barrett of Mayo. Even this confederacy was not equal for O'Donnell, nor did it liberate Connaught from his yoke, and in that year he twice entered Connaught, ravaged Moylurg, destroyed the strong castle of Grange, defeated the united forces of O'Connor and MacDonogh, crossed the Moy and marched as far as Crossmolina, and compelled both Burke and Barret to give him obedience. Every year subsequently, for the next five years, Connaught was subject to his attacks ; and if a chief murmured or became restive, or if his rent was not regularly paid, he entered the province and wasted it with fire and sword.\* It was hardly zeal for the service of an English king that caused him to march under the banners of Skeffington, but O'Neill's territory was to be attacked, and the prospect of inflicting damage on his rival he found it impossible to resist. But such an alliance was not likely to endure. It was composed of too many discordant elements, and the evils of dissension would be likely soon to appear. Ancient enmities are not easily laid aside, neither Kildare nor Ossory had ever shown an apostolic spirit of forgiveness, and it would be difficult indeed to discover any object for which they could work harmoniously together. O'Donnell's only object was to injure, and, if possible, ruin O'Neill, and this done he would have no special enthusiasm for England or England's Viceroy. Nor did Kildare or Ossory wish to be placed in a subordinate position to such as Skeffington, for both were proud,

\* *Annals of Four Masters. Annals of Loch Ce.*

both belonged to ancient families, who for centuries had been possessed of almost regal power, and both considered it an indignity to be thus placed under the command of a simple English knight. Some damage was done to Tirowen by the allied forces, but it was not considerable.\* Skeffington, not remarkable for military talents and ill supported, was able to do nothing more. He and Kildare quarrelled, intrigues were set on foot against him, and the influence of Kildare was such that Skeffington was recalled, and Kildare himself became once more Lord Deputy.† Apparently as a counterpoise, Lord James Butler, Ossory's son, was continued in the office of Lord Treasurer.

During his last term of office Kildare was as active as ever and as overbearing. All those who had acted as his friends during the years of stress and trial which had passed he favoured and exalted. But with those who had acted as his enemies he determined to be even, and amongst them Allen, Archbishop of Dublin, and the Earl of Ossory were selected as the special objects of his resentment. Allen was Lord Chancellor, he had been the creature and favourite of Wolsey, and this fact alone was enough to turn against him Kildare's wrath. He was asked to give an account of the public moneys that had passed through his hands as Chancellor; his explanation of many things was halting and insufficient, and Kildare summarily dismissed him from office,‡ and appointed in his place a staunch and faithful friend of his own, — Cromer, Archbishop of Armagh. But his old enemy, Ossory, he harassed and persecuted still more, ravaged his lands, destroyed his castles and attacked his city of Kilkenny. Nor did he disdain alliances with the Irish chiefs, but, on the contrary, gave a daughter in marriage to O'Carroll of Ely and another to O'Connor of Offaly,|| and it was at his suggestion that his brother John and O'Neill devastated Louth. In some family squabble between the O'Carrolls, the Deputy had interfered on behalf of his son-in-law, and in some small engagement received a gun-shot wound, which was serious, and often afterwards gave him such pain that it was said he had become mentally deranged. At least such was the view of many who could not otherwise explain

\* Ware's *Annals*, 1531. *State Papers*, pp. 151-2. (O'Donnell's submission.)

† *Ibid.*, 1532.

‡ *State Papers*, p. 159. He was appointed Chancellor in 1528, and dismissed in July, 1532.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 161.

the violence of his conduct.\* Secret consultations were held by Allen and Ossory, in conjunction with the late Deputy, Skeffington. It was proposed to arraign Kildare before the King, a majority of the Irish Council were found to be in favour of this course, and Allen, Master of the Rolls, was deputed to proceed to England. He told Henry VIII. that English laws, manners, habits and language were circumscribed within a circuit of twenty miles, that the exactions and oppressions practised on the inhabitants loyal to England had driven many from the land, and that their lands were occupied by Irish enemies, from which it might be inferred that English power in Ireland was almost at an end. Impressed with the gravity of these accusations, the King was highly incensed against the Deputy, and sent him a peremptory mandate to at once proceed to England and answer for his conduct. Kildare was in a cruel difficulty. He could not disobey the King's summons, and he feared to obey it. He was conscious that he had made mistakes, that his conduct had been arbitrary and oppressive. He knew that his enemies were able, influential and vindictive and that whatever irregularities he had been guilty of their malignity would turn into crimes, and he sent his wife to England hoping that through her influential friends the King would relent. In the meantime he furnished his castles with arms and ammunition from the government stores as if he intended in the last resort to rebel. In England his wife put forth her best efforts on his behalf, and her friends were powerful, but it was in vain. Henry would not be moved. His summons was urgent and would not be recalled; it was dangerous even to delay; and with a heavy heart and evident foreboding of ill, Kildare left Ireland (1534), never afterwards to return.†

\* Cox, p. 224. He received the wound besieging the Castle of Birr. He regained, says Cox, his health but not his "intellectuals," and was ever after "a little crackbrained."

† Cox, pp. 225-6.





## CHAPTER XXVII.

### *The Folly of Silken Thomas.*

The Earl of Kildare calls a Council at Drogheda—Appoints his son Thomas, his Deputy—His advice to him—Rumor that Kildare was executed in England—Silken Thomas decides to rebel—Surrenders the Sword of State—His conduct at the Council—Attacked Dublin—Failed to capture Dublin Castle—Murder of Archbishop Allen—Progress of the rebellion—Silken Thomas and Lord James Butler—Conduct of the Dublin citizens—Reinforcements from England with Skeffington—Silken Thomas excommunicated—Capture of Maynooth—The friends and enemies of Silken Thomas—Lord Leonard Gray appointed Commander of the English forces—Silken Thomas submits and sent to England—Gray appointed Viceroy—The Fitzgeralds executed in London—Young Gerald Fitzgerald—Attempts to capture him—First Geraldine League—Manus O'Donnell—Young Fitzgerald escapes to France—His fate.

WHEN Kildare was leaving for England he was directed by Henry VIII. to appoint someone as his Deputy on whom he could rely. It was necessary that the Irish Government should not be left without a head, and it was moreover necessary, in the troubled times then existing, that he should be a person of prudence and courage, a man capable of forming his own judgment, not acting on impulse or caprice, not likely to accept as certainties, at least without careful scrutiny, the interested reports of others, and not likely to act from personal rancour or become the tool of faction. Perhaps Kildare found it difficult to discover any such person to act for him. His conduct had recently been hard to understand. He had made many enemies,\* his deputy would have to keep these enemies in check and to interpret his own recent acts in a favourable light; and it may be that even his best friends shrank from undertaking such a burden. Either from necessity or choice, he appointed his son Thomas to the office, and the appointment was in

\* These enemies were among the Privy Council, for Kildare in his speech at Drogheda declared that they would be willing to risk the loss of one of their eyes, if they could be assured that he would lose both his. (Cox, p. 227.)

every way unfortunate and, for the Geraldines, had a tragic termination. Thomas was not yet 21 years old. He had neither the wisdom nor experience of age, but, on the contrary, had more than the usual share of the rashness and impetuosity of youth. Generous, brave, unsuspecting, he had not the penetration to see where danger lurked, did not realise the number of his enemies, nor the extent of their malignity, and readily fell into the snares which they skilfully laid for his destruction. His father, before taking ship from Drogheda, seems to have had some misgiving as to the choice he made, some premonition of impending ill, and in the presence of the assembled Privy Council gave his son some sound advice, which that young man would have done well to have acted upon. "My son, Thomas (he said), you know that my sovereign lord, the King, has sent for me into England, and what shall betide me God knows, for I do not. But whatever happens I am now well spent in years, and so I must soon die, because I am old.\* Wherefore, as my winter is well nigh ended, and the spring of your age now buds, my will is that you behave so wisely in these your green years that with honour you may grow to that hoary winter through which your father is marching fast. And because it pleases his majesty, the King, that upon my departure I should substitute in my place someone for whose government I could answer, although I know your years are tender and your judgment not matured, and, therefore, I might with good cause be reluctant to put a naked sword in a young man's hand. Yet, because I am your father, I am satisfied to share with you the command of the ship of State, so that I may be able to command you as a father and correct you as my son, if you should wrongly handle the helm. And now my desire is rather to learn how to die in the fear of God than to live in the pomp of the world. But do you consider how easy it is to destroy, how hard to build up, and in all your affairs be ruled by this Council whose wisdom will be able to restrain you with sound and sage advice, for though in authority you rule them, they in Council must rule you. My son, you know that my late wounds stifle my talk, or I would have grated longer on this matter, for a good tale may be twice told. . . . But though my fatherly affection requires my discourse to be longer, I trust your good inclination asks it to be shorter, and upon that assurance here, in the presence of this honourable assembly, I deliver you this sword."†

\* This cannot be reconciled with Gilbert's statement (*Viceroy's*, p. 467), that Gerald, in 1502, was only 15 years old, which would make his age at this time only 47.

† Cox pp. 226-7. He left Drogheda for England about February, 1534.

In an atmosphere of adulation and intrigue these salutary counsels were soon forgotten. Thomas was thoughtless and vain, so fond of dress that he was called Silken Thomas, proud of his family, its power and its ancient renown, and surrounded by those flatterers who flourish within the shadow of authority, his self-confidence was without bounds. His father's enemies resolved to take advantage of his innocence and credulity, and industriously spread abroad a report that when his father reached London he was put to death. The lie had the desired effect, for, though it was a lie, it was quickly believed. A wise man would hesitate to believe such a story, a prudent man would at least wait until full inquiry could be made, so that its truth or falsity could be ascertained. But Silken Thomas was neither a wise, nor a prudent man, and, without stopping to consider its inherent improbability or the source from which it came he accepted the whole story as true, and prepared to be revenged as best he could. With a retinue of 140 horsemen he entered the city of Dublin, then crossed the river to St. Mary's Abbey where the Council was sitting, and with flushed face and quivering lips he flung the Sword of State on the Council table and proclaimed that he was no longer Henry's Deputy but his foe. "I have (he said), more mind to conquer than to govern, to meet him in the field than to serve him in office, and if all the hearts of England and Ireland join in this quarrel, as I trust they will, then should he be a byword for his heresy, lechery and tyranny, wherein the age to come may skore him among the ancient princes of most abominable and hateful memory." And Campion adds that he used many other slanderous and foul terms, "which for regard of the King's posterity I have no mind to utter." \* His own and his father's friend, Cromer Archbishop of Armagh, sought to dissuade him from his folly took him affectionately by the hand, and with tears streaming down his face used every form of entreaty. It was in vain. Among the Deputy's followers was an Irish minstrel who just then struck upon his harp some wild notes of defiance, in his own tongue, begged of the great Geraldine to be revenged, and the thoughtless words of the harper were more potent than the appeals and entreaties of the Archbishop. And, breathing forth vengeance and war, Silken Thomas rushed from the Council Chamber to his doom.†

He had soon gathered around him his own retainers, his tenants and friends, and he was joined by large numbers of the

\* Campion's *History*, p. 176.

† Cox p. 231. Ware's *Annals*. These events occurred on the 11th June.



Irish both within the Pale and on its borders, and at the head of this army—more formidable in numbers than in discipline—he appeared before Dublin and demanded the submission of the city. The citizens were then as always devotedly loyal to the English king, but they had no organized forces for defence, and the plague which was after making great havoc among them weakened their capacity for resistance. They reluctantly submitted, but the government officials retired within the shelter of Dublin Castle, which was so strongly fortified that the ordnance of Silken Thomas was unable to make any impression on its defences. Leaving a portion of his forces to continue the siege of the Castle, the rebellious Geraldine, at the head of the remainder, swept in anger through the district of Fingal,\* laying waste the homes of the English residents in that district. Within the Castle meanwhile was Allen, Archbishop of Dublin, and had he remained there his position was one of security. But he was by nature timorous, he had long been the bitter enemy of the Geraldines, he had striven with the Butler faction for the ruin of Kildare, and in the intrigues which drove Kildare's son to revolt it is easy to discern his hand. The prospect of Dublin Castle being captured by that young man he regarded with dismay, feeling that he would receive no mercy, and in the hope of getting beyond his rage he secretly and stealthily took shipping for England. Perhaps it was by stress of weather, perhaps it was by treachery, the vessel was driven on the beach at Clontarf, and the terrified Archbishop hastened to take refuge in a friend's house in the neighbouring village of Artane. His hiding place was soon discovered and the soldiers of Silken Thomas dragged the unfortunate Archbishop from his bed before their master. Allen was not a man to inspire much sympathy or respect. "He was an astute, hard man and, like Cromwell, had been trained up in business to the detriment of his humanity or even honesty." † As Commissioner of Wolsey's legatine court, he was both hated and feared, he was a sharer in the spoliation of many monasteries, his letters to Wolsey's successor, Cromwell, show how avaricious and grasping he was, and Kildare was enabled to dismiss him from the Chancellorship because he appropriated public funds to his own personal uses. ‡ Yet even a worse man might have excited pity and might expect mercy, as he threw himself before Fitzgerald, bareheaded and barefooted, dressed only in his shirt, his hands clasped piteously in supplication. It is true that Silken

\* Fingal was that district, North of Dublin, extending eastwards to the sea by Clontarf and on to Howth. (*Book of Rights*, p. 187.)

† Gasquet *Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries*, pp. 20-1.

‡ D'Alton's *History of the Archbishops of Dublin*, pp. 184-90.

Thomas did not tell his followers to murder him, for the words he used were "take away from me that clown," but before his eyes the soldiers fell upon the hapless Allen and butchered him, and he did not interfere. And if Henry II. can be justly considered as at least partly guilty of the murder of Beckett, there is equal reason for holding Fitzgerald guilty of the murder of Allen.\*

A cause which has to rely for success on popular sympathy and support is not served by crime, least of all by the crime of murder, and Allen's tragic fate inspired horror, and cast a dark shadow on the prospects of Silken Thomas. But for the time there was nothing to stay his progress, nor did he cease until he had plundered and wasted the whole territory from Dublin to Drogheda. It was then that he appealed to his cousin, Lord James Butler, expressing his willingness to forget their ancient enmity and begging him to join him, and promising that, in the event of success, they should share all Ireland between them. Nothing could be more discouraging than the reply to these overtures.† Butler, indeed, confesses a reluctance to call him cousin, as his treason and "lewdness" have shamed his kindred, "I had rather (he says) in this quarrel die thine enemy than live thy partner. For the kindness you proffer me and good love in the end of your letter the best return I can make is to advise you, though you have gone far, to pause ere you go too far. Ignorance and error and a false notion of duty have carried you unaware to this folly but not so far that you may not retrieve your error. The King is a vessel of bounty and mercy and your words against him shall not be counted malicious, but rather the outcome of heat and thoughtlessness, except by persevering in your present course you prove yourself to be acting mischievously and wilfully." Such advice as this, it might be said such rebukes, were ill suited to the fiery temper of the Geraldine, and to make an effective and suitable retort, he entered Butler's territory and wasted it with fire and sword, nor were the forces of Ossory able to offer an effective resistance.

From wasting the lands of his relative and enemy he directed his steps towards Dublin, where matters of urgent importance demanded his presence. Though powerful on land he was powerless on sea, and the ocean highway being open, messengers were despatched to England, begging for assistance and painting in strong colours the danger which hung over the city. Henry received these messengers well, commended the inhabitants of Dublin for their loyalty, told them to resist the rebel and that

\* Ware's *Annals*. The murder was committed on the 28th July:

† Cox, pp. 232-3.

succour would soon be sent them. Thus encouraged, the citizens rose against Fitzgerald's soldiers, besieged in turn those who were besieging Dublin Castle, and when Silken Thomas and his army appeared again before the walls, the gates were closed against them, their friends inside were already prisoners, and several sallies were made from the city in which some damage was inflicted on the besiegers, and in which one Mores\* is specially commended for his courage. To capture the city Thomas found to be impossible. He had taken some of the citizens prisoners and offered to exchange them with his own soldiers, who were prisoners within the city, and when this offer was accepted he raised the siege.†

No sooner had the city been thus relieved than the ships with reinforcements from England were seen coming up the harbour. Silken Thomas was still near Dublin, a portion of the English forces—180 in all—landed near Howth; and these he allowed to land without opposition, then, suddenly falling upon them, he cut them to pieces, killed many, and took the remainder prisoners. And, in addition, one of his followers captured an English vessel freighted with choice English geldings. Yet this success was only partial and transient and could not affect the final issue of the campaign. Sir William Brereton and 500 men landed on the southern shore of Dublin Bay. He was followed by the new Lord Deputy, Sir William Skeffington, and the whole army soon entered the city, where they were effusively welcomed by the citizens.‡ Nor was this all that happened to dispirit Silken Thomas. It had long since been ascertained that the Earl of Kildare had not been executed, and many of Fitzgerald's followers must have asked themselves what they were fighting for, and why should they continue to fight. For the murder of the Archbishop of Dublin, a sentence of excommunication in its most aggravated form had been published against all concerned in the crime, and Thomas was mentioned by name.|| This must have driven many from his side, as they did not care to be identified with a man, or a cause, visited with such ecclesiastical censures. His cousin, Butler, far from lending any assistance, was intriguing against him with O'Brien of Thomond. The efforts to give the rebellion the character of a religious war were futile, and when the Emperor, Charles V.

\* Hamilton's *Calendar of State Papers*, p. 12. Skeffington tells his friend, Cromwell, that the "said Mores boldly went out of the gates of Dublin and with his own hand slew divers of the rebel's best footmen."

† Cox, pp. 235-7.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 238. He landed on the 11th October, and was accompanied by Lord Leonard Gray. (Ware's *Annals*.)

|| *State Papers* (Henry VIII.), Vol. II., pp. 217-19.



and the Pope were appealed to, so that they might aid in striking down a King, who was the common enemy of both, they gave some vague promises of assistance but they gave nothing more.\*

When Skeffington arrived from England the year was advanced, and he determined to mature his plans in Dublin and make all needful preparations and open the campaign in the following spring. But some of the more ardent spirits in his army were impatient of this delay and complained to the government of England of his inactivity. And they had good grounds of complaint, for Silken Thomas, aided by O'More and O'Connor of Offaly, was sweeping like a hurricane through Meath, destroying the property of those in sympathy with England. He had burned Trim, Dunboyne and Kells, had recaptured Kildare and garrisoned his castle of Maynooth. Yet Skeffington would not be moved.† He was more capable in a civil than in a military office, he was old, his health was not good, and the fire and energy of youth were extinguished by infirmity and age. Neither entreaty nor menace could compel him to commence operations while the winter lasted, but when the spring came his sluggishness was laid aside. With his whole army he marched from Dublin, and after some desultory operations of minor importance in Meath, he advanced to attack the castle of Maynooth. The castle was the richest of all Kildare's castles, it was strongly built, its keep was considered impregnable, and Silken Thomas hoped that its garrison of 100 men would be able to keep Skeffington at bay, until he himself would come to its relief. For nine days the siege lasted and at length, on the 23rd March, 1535, the heavy ordnance of the besiegers had made so large a breach in the wall that an entry was effected. In the attack which followed more than 60 of the garrison were slain; the remainder, numbering 37, were taken prisoners. Two days later the prisoners were tried by a military court and condemned to death, and the heads of the principal men were put on the turrets of the castle.‡

\* Leland, Vol. II., p. 144.

† *State Papers*, Vol. II., pp. 219-24. Allen's letter to Cromwell. Also p. 226, *et seq.*, further Letter from Allen.

‡ Cox, p. 239. Ware's *Annals*. *State Papers*, Vol. II., p. 236. Both Cox and Ware have a story, taken it seems, from the same source, that the captain of the garrison—Paresse—foster brother to Silken Thomas—sur-rendered the castle for a bribe and yet was executed. But this story is evidently untrue, for in the letter sent by the Deputy and Council *the very day after the execution of the prisoners* (dated, Maynooth, 26th March), there is no mention of this treachery, though the whole particulars of the siege and capture of the place are given, and Paresse is mentioned by name.

Silken Thomas was not far off when the castle of Maynooth fell into the enemy's hands. He was rapidly advancing to its relief at the head of an army of 7000 men, drawn principally from Connaught, but the news that Maynooth had fallen stayed his further advance, and so disheartened his followers that most of them abandoned him. He made his way to Thomond, secure of an asylum there from O'Brien, and perhaps also, of assistance in prosecuting the war. And he would, perhaps, have got help but that his cousin, Butler, had stirred up strife in Thomond and had urged Donogh O'Brien to claim the chieftaincy of the province,\* and the ruling chief, compelled to defend his position at home, was unable to give any assistance to Fitzgerald. In Desmond, also, Butler had been active, and had induced the Earl of Desmond to take no part in the war, and for Silken Thomas to look for aid in that quarter was vain. In addition to this his old friend and ally, O'More of Leix, was induced or terrorised by the Earl of Ossory to desert him. But he had still some forces, and his resources were by no means exhausted. O'Connor of Offaly and O'Carroll were still ready to stand by him, and joined to these he was soon again at the head of a fresh army. In the meantime Skeffington was inactive. He had got ill after the capture of Maynooth and rested there for some time, nor did he, even when he got well, follow up the advantages he had gained. While he remained idle, Silken Thomas was wasting the Pale. In addition, a report was circulated that both O'Neill and O'Donnell were on the point of coming to his assistance.† This darkening prospect alarmed the English of the Pale; they complained of Skeffington's inactivity and messengers were sent to England demanding that he be superseded, and Lord Leonard Gray, whose abilities were recognised, be appointed in his place.‡ This prayer was in part granted and in August, 1535, Lord Leonard Gray, was given supreme military command though Skeffington was still continued as Deputy. But Gray's authority in military matters was unlimited, what he was to do was left entirely to his own discretion, and he pursued the campaign with such vigour and success that the allies of Silken Thomas were forced to abandon him. At length O'Connor of Offaly, who had stood by him longest, submitted, and finally Thomas himself, reduced to the last extremity, sent a message to Gray that he was willing to submit on terms. The terms he asked were his life to be

\* This Donogh O'Brien was nephew to the Chief of Thomond, and married to a daughter of the Earl of Ossory. (*State Papers*, pp. 171-230.)

† *State Papers*, p. 247.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 266, *et seq.*

spared and his lands left him, nor is it likely that he would submit without at least a promise of his life, yet Skeffington stated that he submitted "without condition."\* This was the end of the rebellion. Lord Gray with the unfortunate prisoner proceeded to England, and soon after Silken Thomas found himself lodged in the Tower.

Henry VIII. was glad that the rebellion was suppressed and that the audacious rebel was at last in his power, and he wrote a letter of thanks to the Deputy. Yet his satisfaction was not complete. What he wanted was unconditional surrender on the part of Silken Thomas; he did not approve of any conditions being attached and told the Deputy that if Fitzgerald "had been apprehended after such sort as was convenable to his deservings the same had been much more thankful and better to our contentacion."† It was quite evident that the unfortunate Geraldine would have to atone for his rebellion with the sacrifice of his life, although Norfolk had advised that the conditions made with him by Gray and Lord James Butler be kept, otherwise no Irishman would ever again trust himself to an Englishman, or believe in his promises.‡ This advice Henry did not take, nor was his ferocious rage satisfied with the blood of a single victim. He wished to extirpate the whole Fitzgerald family, and he found a ready instrument of his will. On the last day of the year (1535), Sir William Skeffington had died at Kilmainham, and Lord Leonard Gray had been appointed his successor. He was but a short time in office when, under the pretext of friendship, he invited the five uncles of Silken Thomas to a banquet at Dublin. They went, fearing as little as did O'Connor of Offaly in former days, when invited to a banquet by Birmingham, the "treacherous Baron." They were treated with similar treachery, for Gray arrested them and sent them prisoners to England, where, as well as their nephew, they were imprisoned in the Tower of London. They were conveyed to England in a vessel called the Cow, and this proved to be a source of serious alarm to them, as they had heard of a prophecy which said—That an Earl's five sons should in time to come be wafted for England in a cow's belly but should never return. || The fate of Henry's prisoners was not

\* *State Papers*, p. 274. Skeffington's letter bears date 24th August, 1535. The rebellion was then over.

† From this it appears that Fitzgerald did NOT surrender as Skeffington declared, "without condition," and the same appears from the letter of the Privy Council, and also from Norfolk's letter to Cromwell. (*State Papers*, pp. 275-8, 280.)

‡ *State Papers*, p. 277.

|| Ware's *Annals*. Leland, Vol. II., p. 153. *State Papers*, pp. 304-5



a pleasant one, and has been justly described as a condition in which they were lodged like hogs and fed like dogs,\* and the pitiable state to which Silken Thomas was reduced would move the hardest heart to compassion. In a letter from the Tower, which he wrote to his friend O'Brien of Thomond,† he begged him to send him £20 for the purpose of procuring food and clothes. And he told his friend, Rothe, that since he came to London he had got no money, that he was without either stockings or shoes, that he had no shirt but one, and that instead of a velvet cloak furred with lambskin fur, he had no garment but a single frieze cloak, that repeatedly, during the severity of winter, he had gone bare-footed and barelegged and that he would have to go naked but for the charity of some of his fellow-prisoners, who had given him old socks and shoes and shirts. To such a condition of poverty and hunger and nakedness was that young noble reduced who had so long known the comforts and even splendour of luxury and power. His father was already dead—the knowledge of his son's folly had killed him—his uncles were his fellow-prisoners and were no doubt reduced to the same pitiable condition as himself, and, broken in spirit, it must have been a relief to his tortured mind that on the 3rd February, 1537, he and his five uncles were led forth from their prison and executed together at Tyburn.‡ Three of these uncles had opposed their nephew in his rebellion, but it mattered not: they were of the Fitzgerald family, in Henry's eyes this made them enemies of the State, and as such they deserved to be sacrificed.

Henry's rage was even yet unappeased, for there still remained a son of the late Earl of Kildare, a boy twelve years of age and named, like his father, Gerald. When his uncles were seized and sent to England the lad was ill in one of his father's castles in Kildare. His mother was in England. He was in charge of his tutor, a priest named Leverus,|| and this faithful friend rightly judging that his pupil's life would be sought had him secretly sent to O'Brien of Thomond,\*\* Even there he was not safe. O'Brien wished to befriend him and was willing to defend him, and for a time the boy's place of residence was kept secret and was changed from time to time. But it could not always be kept thus secret, for there were spies on his track. And Gray,

\* Gasquet. *Henry VIII., and the English Monasteries*, p. 4.

† *State Papers*, pp. 402-3.

‡ *State Papers*, Vol. II., p. 429.

|| He was afterwards Bishop of Kildare, and, refusing to take the oath of supremacy (1559), was deprived of his diocese. (*Ware's Bishops*.)

\*\* *State Papers*, Vol. II., p. 363. He was in Thomond in 1536, and O'Brien refused the Irish Council's demand to give him up.

the Lord Deputy, though he was young Gerald's uncle, was more anxious to curry favour with his royal master than to defend his nephew, and Henry would not be satisfied until the lad was in his power.\* Unable to conceal his whereabouts and doubtful of his capacity to defend him against a leader so skilful and daring as Gray, and with such resources at his command, and no doubt anxious besides to save his province from the horrors of war, O'Brien sent young Gerald to his aunt in Cork—Lady Eleanor MacCarthy. She had been married to MacCarthy of Carbury, she was now a widow, and just at the time (1538), received an offer of marriage from Manus O'Donnell, the chieftain of Tirconnell. She was devotedly attached to her nephew, and perhaps more for his sake than for her own she accepted the offer, and both aunt and nephew set out from Cork to Tirconnell. On their march through Desmond and Connaught they were treated with every mark of respect. It was well-known that the boy was an object of special detestation to Henry, that those who treated him with respect, and still more favoured his escape, would earn the King's enmity, and that, on the other hand, whoever betrayed him was sure that pecuniary reward and royal favours awaited him. Yet, neither menaces nor bribes, neither fear of the King's anger nor hope of his favours was sufficient to procure the boy's betrayal, and both himself and his aunt arrived safely at Tirconnell, where Lady Eleanor and O'Donnell were married.†

The pursuit and persecution of this boy irritated the Irish chiefs. The Geraldines were popular. They had become thoroughly Irish, with the faults and virtues of Irish chiefs, and it did seem hard that a lad, who had committed no crime, and whose youth and innocence might have shielded him from harm, should be punished because of his brother's folly, and thus persecuted and hunted down in his native land. Laying aside for the moment their ancient jealousies, the Irish chiefs formed what was called the First Geraldine League, the object being to protect young Gerald Fitzgerald and ultimately to restore him to his father's estates; and to make sure of his personal safety he was assigned a body-guard of twenty-four horsemen, who were to accompany him wherever he went.‡ The members

\* He was offered the King's pardon and to be the King's "true and loving subject," but the fate of his uncles and brother was recent, and his advisers did not think it wise that he should trust himself to such promises. (*State Papers*, Vol. II., p. 537.)

† *State Papers*, Vol. III., p. 28.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 44. (Ormond's letter to the Irish Council). Ormond says that young Gerald was to be sent to the King of Scotland for what purpose he could not tell.

of the League were O'Neill and O'Donnell in the north, the Connaught chiefs, O'Brien and Desmond in the south, and with them would be O'Connor of Offaly and O'Carroll, who were young Gerald's relatives. This was unpleasant news both to the Deputy and the King. What Henry would have wished was to see these chiefs quarrelling, but unity, and, above all, unity to protect young Gerald, he both hated and feared. But he was stubborn and persistent and not easily baulked of his prey. The Deputy was eager to carry out his wishes and even to anticipate them, and despairing of taking young Fitzgerald by force, he was ready to employ treachery and hoped that by treachery he would succeed. He invited O'Neill and O'Donnell to a friendly council near Dundalk (1539), to which they promised to bring young Gerald. But the two northern chiefs, perhaps, because they had reason to suspect that treachery was intended, declined coming to the conference at all, and Gray was disappointed and baffled, for his treacherous plans had failed. He candidly told his master, Henry VIII., what he intended. "And if they had kept appointment with me having young Gerald with them, howsoever the thing had chanced, by the oath that I have made unto your Grace they should have left the young Gerald behind them quick or dead." \*

O'Donnell had so far been a faithful member of the Geraldine League, but his wife thought she had reason to suspect his fidelity, and that perhaps he would betray her nephew, and it was time to take alarm when the Irish Council could tell Henry VIII. that they had secured the friendship of O'Donnell, as well as O'Neill.† To ensure the lad's safety he was put on board a vessel bound for St. Malo, disguised as a peasant and having with him his faithful tutor (Leverus), besides two others. But even in France he was not safe. A certain person named Warner was directed to proceed to Rennes and watch his movements, and report everything to the British Ambassador at Paris.‡ Wherever the young lad went he was followed by Henry's spies, he had frequently to change his place of residence, and though he was treated with kindness everywhere and received every mark of respect, || yet he did not feel secure in France and finally made his way to Rome. His kinsman, Cardinal Pole,\*\*

\* *State Papers*, Vol. III., p. 127.

† *Ibid.*, p. 196.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 211-13.

|| Even the spy Warner declares that he was a "very proper young gentleman."

\*\* If one Cardinal (Wolsey), treated the Fitzgeralds with harshness and injustice, it is gratifying to know that another Cardinal (Pole), expiated Wolsey's enmity to the house of Kildare. (Meehan's *Geraldines*, p. 55.)



was able to protect him there, surrounded him with everything he required, had him educated as became his position ; and when Henry VIII. was dead and his son sat on the throne, Gerald Fitzgerald was allowed to return from exile (1552), and was restored to his possessions, and, two years later, he became Earl of Kildare.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### *Henry Becomes King of Ireland.*

“State of Ireland and Plan for its Reformation”—The Pale—Black Rents—Native chiefs—“Degenerate English”—St. Bridget and her Guardian Angel—The Pander’s advice to Henry VIII—Ireland described by Finglas—Henry’s knowledge of the country and his anxiety about it—His difficulties—Determines to conquer it—Strength and weakness of the Irish chiefs—The Anglo-Irish—King Henry’s strength—His nobles—His Parliament—His pecuniary resources—O’Brien of Thomond attacked—Lord Gray’s preparations—His forces—Capture of O’Brien’s Bridge—The English soldiers mutiny—O’Connor of Offaly attacked—Condition of Leinster—O’Neill and O’Donnell—Battle of Bellahoe—Gray in Tirowen—His journey to Galway—His relations with the Irish Council—Returns to England—Convicted and executed—His successor Brereton—St. Leger appointed Deputy—His policy of conciliation—Submission of the chiefs—Henry proclaimed King of Ireland—The Irish chiefs get titles from him—Terms of their submission—The old system and the new—Henry’s policy—Its success—His power in Ireland.

AMONG the State Papers relating to Ireland in the reign of Henry VIII., the first place is given to one written in 1515, and which describes the state of Ireland at that date, and in addition furnishes a plan for its reformation.\* The writer is unknown but he signs himself Panderus, or the Pander.† He was probably an Englishman, his sympathies are strongly English, his views are English, his desire was to see all Ireland brought effectually under English rule, and his plan of reformation was drawn up for that purpose. The story he has to tell, in itself is not an agreeable one, and it must have been humiliating to England, for it is the story of its failure in Ireland so far. Three centuries and a half had passed since Henry II. spent Christmas in his wickerwork palace in Hoggin Green and had feasted the Irish chiefs, almost all of whom had sub-

\* *State Papers*; (Henry VIII.), Vol. II., pp: 1-314

† He lived during the reigns of Edward IV., Ed. v., Richard III., Henry VII., and Henry VIII. (Ware’s *Writers*, p. 90.)

mitted to him as their king. And it was the fashion to speak of that monarch as the conqueror of Ireland. But in the sixteenth century so far was it from being conquered that but a small district on the east coast acknowledged the supremacy of England and was subject to its laws. A line drawn from Dundalk to Kells, through Ardee, from Kells to Trim and Kilcock, then southward to Naas, and eastward from Naas to Rathcoole and Tallaght, ending at Dalkey on the coast, marked the boundaries of the Pale. It was a small and contracted area, not more than half of the modern counties of Louth and Meath, but a small portion of Kildare, and something more than half of the county of Dublin. Within this area dwelt the English subjects,—some English by birth, many English by descent, but all recognising the supremacy of England, acknowledging themselves as its subjects, accepting its laws, and demanding from it that protection of life and security of property which it is the duty of every government to give its subjects.

Yet, these English subjects were not happy, nor was their condition, compared to the purely Irish outside, anything to be envied. The number of officials was large, much larger than was required or desirable for so small a territory, and these officials, eager to enrich themselves, harassed the people with their exactions. In spite of all the enactments against coyne and livery, the people of the Pale were often made familiar with both, for money came but slowly and reluctantly from England, expeditions had to be made against the neighbouring Irish, whose inroads were often destructive, and when money was not to be had for the payment of the army they had to be paid by coyne and livery. A subsidy was sometimes demanded by the English king from his Irish subjects, and loyalty urged them to satisfy his demands. Finally, there was the payment of large sums by way of Black Rent, for the Irish chiefs were restless, and to purchase quietness from them it was necessary that they should be paid. From Down, O'Neill of Clanneboy got £40 a year; a like sum was paid by Louth to O'Neill of Tirowen, while from Meath, O'Connor of Offaly got the large sum of £300 a year, and £20 a year from Kildare. Scattered over the country were a few walled towns, especially the seaports, where English subjects dwelt and English laws were obeyed, and these, surrounded by the native Irish, were compelled to purchase their good will. Wexford paid Black Rent to MacMurrough, Kilkenny and Tipperary to O'Carroll, Cork to MacCarthy, and Limerick had to pay £40 a year to O'Brien of Ara and a like sum to O'Brien of Thomond.\* The remainder of the country was held by sixty

\* *State Papers*, p. 9.



chiefs of Irish descent and thirty of English descent, and each of these Irish chiefs held by the sword and made peace and war as he pleased.

The chiefs of English descent made peace and war in the same way. They had ceased to be England's subjects or to recognise its laws. They intermarried with the Irish, adopted Irish customs, spoke the Irish tongue. Each of them had his brehon to administer the law, and each had an Irish harper in his hall. Such as these were referred to by the English as degenerate English, for they certainly had fallen away from English ways. Such was the case with the Earl of Desmond in Munster, and his kinsmen, the Fitzgeralds, Sir John, Sir Thomas and Sir Gerald of Desmond, as also the Barrys, the Roches, the Cogans, the De Courcys, and Barrets of Cork, and the Powers of Waterford. In Connaught the Burkes and Birminghams and Stantons and Jordans, and Nangles, and Barrets and Prendergasts were as Irish as the O'Connors or the O'Kellys. In Ulster the case was similar with the Savages and the Russels. And in Meath, in the neighbourhood of the Pale itself, were the Dillons, the D'Altons, the Tyrells and Delameres and Tuites, no longer holding their lands by English tenure, but each in the Irish fashion being called the captain of his nation.\*

The Pander laments that such is the existing state of things and attributes the falling away of these Anglo-Irish to the fact that the central government at Dublin was weak and ill supported from England, and that they adopted Irish habits and followed Irish ways as the best way to protect themselves. Nor does he look to the future with much hope. He quotes an old proverb which speaks of the pride of France, the treason of England and the wars of Ireland.† He lays it down that coyne and livery will never cease to be exacted from English subjects until the Irish cease from their wars, that the Irish wars will never cease, and therefore, it necessarily follows, that coyne and livery will never cease. He recalls that St. Bridget once asked of her guardian angel from what Christian land most souls would be damned, and that he replied it was a land in the western part of the world, where there was continual war, from which land souls fell into hell as thick as showers of hail. And he has no doubt that this land is Ireland. "Wherefore (he says), it cannot be denied by every estymation of man but

\* *State Papers*, Vol. II., pp. 5, 25-6.

† *Ibid.*, p. 11. He thinks the war will never have an end unless "Godde sett in mennes brestes to fynde some newe remedye that never was founde before."

that the angell dyd understande the lande of Ireland.”\* His only hope is that the King would take the reformation of the country seriously in hand. He points out that such is his duty, and to encourage him he prophecies that if he did, with the army of England and Ireland, he would be able to subdue France, rescue the Greeks, recover the city of Constantinople, vanquish the Turks, win the Holy Cross and the Holy Land, and die Emperor of Rome, and “eternal bliss shall be his end.”†

So glittering a prospect ought to have roused to action a man even less ambitious than Henry VIII., but apparently he had little faith in the prophet or his prophecy—for prophecies are often made and seldom fulfilled—and Ireland for the next few years occupied but a small share of his thoughts, which were concerned with greater things. The ability of Surrey might have accomplished much if he had been supported by England, and if his plans had been adopted and carried out, but his success in the subjugation of Ireland was only partial and incomplete, and the effects transitory and unimportant. After he left Ireland the country was allowed once more to drift. The English colony, alternately ruled by Geraldine and Butler, was ruined by both, and when another writer ‡ undertook to describe Ireland from what he saw and knew (1534), the country was in the same condition as it was twenty years before. The limits of the Pale were still the same and so was the condition of its people. If anything, it had become more Irish. As in the purely Irish districts, war was made, and peace, on individual initiative and without consultation with the Deputy, or his Council. Irish dress was worn, coyne and livery were exacted, the Irish tongue was spoken, Irish senachies compiled their genealogies for the subjects of an English king, Irish bards sounded their praises or, perhaps, satirized their foes, and Irish minstrels and harpers were still welcome in their feudal halls. Finglas himself was an official || and, perhaps, on that account, conceals much of the exactions and greediness of his class, but it may be assumed that their rapacity remained unchanged. All Ulster was in the hands of the Irish chiefs, and the King, who was, by descent, heir to the Ulster Earldom,\*\* had lost all his

\* *State Papers*, p. 11.

† *Ibid.*, p. 31.

‡ This was Finglas, who wrote “A Breviate of the getting of Ireland and of the decay of the same.” It is the 4th of the tracts in Harris’s *Hibernica*, pp. 79-103.

|| He was chief Baron of the Exchequer, and was promoted from that office to be Chief Justice of the King’s Bench, May 8th, 1534. (Morrin, *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, p. 12.)

\*\* As the descendant of the Duke of Clarence and Elizabeth de Burgho.

inheritance in that province except the single manor of Carlingford. From Connaught he received nothing whatever, nor did he from Munster, where the Earl of Desmond, Irish in dress and language and habits and surrounded by Irish retainers, lived as an independent prince, and had a prince's revenue. Even the Kildare Geraldines and the Butler's, though invested from time to time with the office of Lord Deputy, were more Irish than English, exacted coyne and livery, ruled their own territory like independent chiefs, and were not obedient to English laws. The various chiefs on the borders of the Pale, such as O'Neill and O'Connor of Offaly, were still paid their Black Rents. Finglas, indeed, speaks of the weakness of MacMurrough and O'Byrne and O'Toole, and of the ease with which they might be subdued. Yet, MacMurrough was still paid his yearly allowance out of the King's Treasury, and it may be assumed it was not because he was loved, but because he was feared.

Henry VIII. was kept accurately informed from time to time as to the condition of Ireland. The letters of Surrey in particular were many, the information he supplied accurate and full, and the suggestions he made were characterised by wisdom and statesmanship. The King was not slow to learn, and in his letter to Skeffington (1529),\* there is evidence that the miseries of the Pale and the obstacles to the advancement of English power in Ireland are not unknown to him—the squabbles and jealousies between Desmond and Ormond and Kildare, the difficulties of subduing the native chiefs, the sufferings the English subjects endured from coyne and livery. Nor could it be anything else to him than a matter of humiliation and anxiety that Ireland was in such a condition. The genius of Wolsey had exalted England to a high position among the great nations of the Continent. From being “an upstart trying to claim for herself a decent position in the august society of European States,”† she had risen to the dignity of one of the great powers, whose alliance was courted, whose power was felt, whose influence was recognised, whose enmity was feared. But to France and Spain and the Empire she was an upstart still. If one of these powers obtained the assistance of England, they were ready to flatter and caress, but if they found her among their foes they spoke of her as an upstart and a parvenu among the nations, and her king was told to complete the conquest of Ireland, if he could, and leave Continental affairs to the continental powers. Such words had been used by the German

\* *State Papers*, Vol. II., pp. 147-150:

† Creighton's *Cardinal Wolsey*, p. 3.



princes to Richard II., and there is no reason to doubt but that some such sneers were flung at Henry VIII. But if Ireland was thus the cause of mortifying the King's vanity, she was to him a source of danger as well. O'Donnell had intrigued with the King of Scotland against England. The Earl of Desmond had been in treasonable correspondence both with the Emperor and the French monarch. O'Neill of Tirowen had acted similarly ; and when Silken Thomas broke out into rebellion he appealed for continental aid. A French or German army, in alliance with an Irish chief or combination of chiefs, would have easily overrun the Pale and extinguished the feeble remnant of English power, and the whole resources of England would have been taxed to recover Ireland from their grasp. But in such circumstances, no matter what the cost, it would be necessary that it should be reconquered, for Ireland, the subject or independent ally of a continental power, would lower the prestige of England and even be a menace to its existence. Henry VIII. was not blind to these dangers. He sent men and money to Ireland for the conquest of the land, urged each successive Deputy to prosecute the work with vigour, watched with anxiety how they progressed and was irritated and impatient when they did not succeed. The magnitude of the task was made apparent to him, when the rebellion of Silken Thomas cost his Treasury the sum of £40,000.\* This rebellion was entered into without sufficient thought and with inadequate preparation ; it was carried out on no well considered plan ; the warfare was desultory and intermittent ; and its leader had neither experience nor talents. He was without money, his soldiers were without discipline, and he received but partial support from the native chiefs. And if it was so expensive and so difficult to put down such a rebellion, what sacrifices would it not entail to conquer the whole land ? Yet these sacrifices Henry should make, for the time had come when England should abandon Ireland altogether or conquer it. The latter course was determined on, and as soon as Lord Thomas Fitzgerald and his uncles were safely lodged in the Tower of London, the Lord Deputy Gray proceeded to conquer those chiefs and nobles who refused to recognise themselves as subjects of England.

To obtain submission from the Irish and Anglo-Irish chiefs, in the same manner as did Henry II. and John and Richard II., might not be a matter of much difficulty, but such submissions would be hollow and insincere. The English king would be paid some tribute and receive some respect, as long as he was

\* Cox, p. 242:

strong, but when he was involved in some great war and his government at Dublin had become weak, he would no longer get from these chiefs either tribute or respect. Such submissions Henry VIII. did not value nor demand. He wanted Ireland to be an integral part of his dominions, where English law was to be in force, English dress worn, English customs adopted and the English language spoken ; and if the Irish did not submit in this way quietly and peaceably, he was determined to wring submission from them by the sword.

United under a single leader, the Irish could have set all his threats at defiance. Some chiefs, such as O'Neill or O'Brien, could bring an army of 2,000 men into the field, the least of them could muster 300 or more,\* and the army which could be called into action by the Earl of Desmond, or the Earl of Ormond, would be as great as the greatest of the Irish chiefs ; and if all were combined there might be an army of at least fifty thousand men. The population of England was greater than that of Ireland and so was its wealth, and if its utmost efforts were put forth, even a greater army than this might have been enrolled and equipped for a campaign. In point of military equipment, also, it would be superior, and if the issue was to be decided in a single battle, or even in a short campaign, the probability that England would conquer would be strong. But a skilful Irish leader would not risk all on a single battle. He could have retired before the English into the shelter of the woods with which the country was covered. He could have harassed the invading army by falling upon detached parties and by night attacks. He could have wasted the country through which they passed and made it necessary for them to get all their supplies from England. He could have threatened, perhaps cut off, their communications. An army of not more than 3,000, under Art MacMurrough, had by such tactics baffled Richard II. and his army of more than 20,000 men, and what army could have conquered an equally daring leader, at the head of fifty thousand men. But to expect that all Ireland would thus unite cordially against a common enemy was falsified by the experience of the past. In Tirconnell and Tirowen and Connaught and Thomond the same language was spoken, the same manners and habits prevailed, but this was the only bond of agreement between them. O'Donnell would not serve under O'Neill, nor acknowledge his supremacy, and O'Brien would not act with O'Donnell except, perhaps, to plunder O'Neill. Jealousy and suspicion and mutual hate kept these chieftains wide apart, and even the presence of common danger was powerless to

\* *State Papers*, Vol. II., p. 5.

extinguish their animosities. They fought as persistently as did their ancestors, and since the days of Brian Boru had never acted together.

And if the old Irish could not agree in defending their country, still less likely was it that the Irish and Anglo-Irish would coalesce; Fitzgerald and Birmingham and Burke were Irish in dress and habit and language, and the ties which bound them to England were slender and weak, yet these ties were not altogether sundered. They still traced their descent from an Anglo-Norman source, and, settled in a country which their fathers' swords had won, they regarded the people around them as belonging to an inferior race. They allied themselves by marriage with the native chiefs, but they would enter with reluctance, and certainly without enthusiasm, into any movement which proposed to finally destroy English power in Ireland, and on its ruins to establish a united monarchy, with an O'Neill or an O'Brien as its king. Nor was there any Irish leader that could compel their obedience, no descendant of the ancient kings with the genius and courage to abolish the old clan system with the strifes and jealousies and weakness which it bred, to break down the barriers that separated one province from another, to discard as useless, and even mischievous, institutions which belonged to a long passed age, and to gather together the strength of the whole nation as Brian did under his own victorious banner. Such then was the condition of Ireland, weak, feeble, distracted, disorganised, still wanting a central government, still broken up into clans, each independent, each relying on itself, distrustful and suspicious of its neighbour with whom it was ever willing to quarrel and never willing to agree.

But if on the side of Ireland the elements of weakness were many, on the English side were all the elements of strength. The English kings of the Plantagenet and Lancastrian lines were but the first among the powerful feudal nobles. In the extent of their landed possessions, in the amount of their wealth, in the number of their armed retainers, in the splendour of their retinue, such nobles as Warwick, the Kingmaker, might vie even with the crown.\* In all his public undertakings the King was compelled to consult these nobles and to be guided by their advice. In his wars their aid was respectfully, even timidly, invoked. They often thwarted his designs and marred his projects; and when they combined against him they were

\* Warwick was so powerful that the people believed whatever side he favoured in the wars of the Roses was sure of success. (Lingard, Vol. IV., p. 92). And at his house in London six oxen were consumed at a breakfast, "and every tavern was full of his meat." (*Ibid.*, p. 78.)



able to wring from him, as they did from King John, the most humiliating concessions. The wars of the Roses had effected a mighty change, for while it destroyed the power of the feudal lords, it increased the power of the Crown. Many of these nobles had fallen in battle, some beneath the headsman's axe; some had been attainted and as such lost their lands and castles; all emerged from these disastrous wars, their wealth dissipated, either wholly or in great part, their followers slain, their power gone. And when the struggle was over, the strength of any one noble, or any combination of nobles, the King was strong enough to despise. When Henry VIII. became King the greater part of those who were actively engaged in these wars had passed away, but the memory of what they had gone through survived, and their children who succeeded them were ready to submit to anything and everything rather than renew the horrors of the past. The last of the pretenders who had disturbed the reign of Henry VII. had disappeared; none such appeared in the reign of his son; and with none to question his right, or dispute his title, the second Tudor monarch sat secure on the English throne. At the time he resolved on the conquest of Ireland (1535), he had already broken with Rome, made himself head of the church, as well as the State, and plundered the monasteries so well that their plunder brought into his treasury a sum equal to £50,000,000 of our money.\* He was at peace with France and with Scotland, the whole resources of the country were at his command, his treasury was full, his Parliament was made up of slaves, eager to enact whatever he willed, the high placed churchmen were either his creatures or his prisoners, the nobles, deprived of their feudal privileges, crouched in terror at his feet, and the King himself had developed into a tyrant and a voluptuary, as absolute and as immoral as the most despotic monarch of the East. The tyrant became capricious as tyrants will. To be his favourite was dangerous, to be his enemy was fatal, and the favourite of to-day became the enemy of to-morrow. Formerly it was considered little less than exile to be sent to Ireland,† but there was safety in being distant from a capricious tyrant, and the ablest public servants were thankful to be employed there, as they were careful to carry out the King's commands with accuracy and diligence, knowing that failure meant his displeasure and their own ruin, and that the only way of safety was the way of success.

\* Gasquet, *Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries*, p. 77:

† It was so considered by Sir Richard Pembridge, who was appointed Viceroy (1371), but refused to go to Ireland, even though punished with the loss of all his offices in England and threatened besides with imprisonment for disobedience. (Gilbert's *Viceroy*s, pp. 232-3.)

The first of the Irish chiefs to be attacked was O'Brien of Thomond. He had sheltered Silken Thomas in his territory, and he had been disposed to assist him, and he had sheltered young Gerald of Kildare for whose capture the King was so eager. He was in alliance with Desmond, and coming from West to East Thomond, he had often spread terror through the lands of the English subjects. His power was considerable, but he knew well he would be no match for the united forces of England. He foresaw the danger that menaced him, and in a letter to Henry VIII. (13th October, 1535), couched in the most submissive terms,\* he assures the King that he never sent for Thomas Fitzgerald, that he never gave him any help nor did any of his people, but that when Fitzgerald came into his country he could not, for very shame, refuse him meat and drink, "for it hath been of old custom amongst Irishmen to give meat and drink and such little goods as we have."† His cringing and slavish tone was not appreciated, nor his professions of loyalty. It was felt necessary to have him crushed, or at least further humbled, and Captain Francis Herbert writes to his friend, Cromwell, in the following year, that O'Brien is the greatest Irishman and the strongest man of power in Ireland, and that if he were subdued and his pride beaten down, it would cause all Irishmen to quail and to incline to their prince's pleasure and commandment.‡

Before proceeding against O'Brien and the Munster Geraldines, the Deputy went north (June, 1536) to parley with the Great O'Neill, whom he found very tractable in words but unwilling to give definite and binding pledges. Yet Gray dissembled his disappointment, for he believed that O'Connor of Offaly and O'More of Leix were in league with O'Brien, and this formidable confederacy was enough, without having open war with O'Neill. Nor did he believe it wise to proceed so far south as Limerick without having first subjugated the district near Dublin, and with this object in view he entered MacMurrough's country, besieged and captured his strongest castle at Ferns, and struck such terror into the whole family of MacMurrough, that they all agreed to accept such terms as the Deputy would impose, and The MacMurrough, who had been in receipt of eighty marks a year as Black Rent from the Treasury at Dublin, was now glad to receive back his castle of Ferns, on condition of paying the Deputy eighty marks yearly, and bound himself,

\* He addresses Henry "most noble, excellent high and mighty prince, and my most redoubted sovereign High Lord in the humblest manner, that I can or may I recommend me unto your Majesty."

† *State Papers*, Vol. II., p. 287.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 307.

besides, to surrender the castle, whenever the Deputy demanded its surrender.\* In the early part of the year a Parliament was held at Dublin at which the allies of Silken Thomas were attainted, the lands of absentees were confiscated to the Crown, as also the lands held in Ireland by English monasteries, and all payments by way of Black Rent were abolished.† The succession to the crown was declared to be vested in the offspring of Anne Boleyn. In addition, the King was declared—though not at once—the head of the church, nor did this act pass with the consent of the Proctors, who are “loathe that the King’s grace should be Supreme Head of the Church.”‡ From Dublin the Parliament was prorogued to Kilkenny, and Gray, leaving a small force at Dublin to defend the city and its surroundings and directing that bridges be built at Woodstock and Athy, marched against O’Brien. He had with him nearly the whole of the English forces, and assisting him, also, was the Earl of Ossory and his son, “with a goodly company,” the gentlemen of Wexford and Waterford, the Lord Roche and divers others. Finally, impelled either by policy or fear, the Irish chiefs were aiding him—O’More, MacMurrough, Magillapatrik, O’Byrne and O’Carroll.¶ At the head of this army, formidable in numbers and in equipment, Gray directed his steps through Cashel to Limerick, entering that city through the territory of the Earl of Desmond, whose strong castle at Lough Gur\*\* he captured. It was pretended that the Parliament which had been prorogued to Kilkenny was further prorogued to Limerick, but Gray was resolved less on legislation than on war, and neither at Kilkenny nor Limerick were any legislative enactments passed.

A traitor within the camp is more to be feared than an enemy from without, and in the long struggle between Ireland and England it is but historic truth to say that many such traitors have been found on the Irish side. One such now appeared in the person of Donogh O’Brien. He was the nephew of O’Brien of Thomond. He was married to the Earl of Ossory’s daughter, the Earl was a strong and powerful patron on the English side, and Donogh abandoned and betrayed his uncle and his country and took the side of Ossory and the English. Three miles from Limerick, westward and a little by south,

\* *State Papers*, Vol. II, p. 347. (Letters from Allen to Cromwell.)

† *Ibid.*, p. 315. Among the absentees specially mentioned are the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Wiltshire and the Earl of Shrewsbury.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 316. (Brabazon to Cromwell.)

¶ *Ibid.*, p. 354.

\*\* A little south-east of the city of Limerick.



was the strong fortress of Carrigogunnell,\* which for 200 years had been in the possession of the O'Briens. It was strongly built and well-manned, and Donogh O'Brien stipulated for nothing more than this—that the fortress be captured by the English and given into his custody. It was captured in due course and garrisoned, and its custody given over to the Earl of Ossory, who in turn was permitted to hand it over to Donogh's keeping. But the capture of Desmond's stronghold at Lough Gur, or of O'Brien's castle at Carrigogunnell, were small operations compared to the capture of O'Brien's Bridge. Built some miles above Limerick on the Shannon it was of unusual strength. On the numerous arches that spanned the river there were built two strong towers, each some distance off the land, the strongest facing the east bank, built of hewn marble and having walls at least twelve or thirteen feet thick. These towers were filled with many defenders—"gunners, gallow-glasses and horsemen."† They were armed with hand-guns, had some lighter pieces of ordnance and one enormous gun, which discharged balls as large as a man's head. The attacking army was astonished at the skill with which the defenders had fortified themselves with timber and hogsheads of earth.‡ They had, besides, broken down four of the arches of the bridge near the land, nor was access to the banks of the river possible for an army encumbered with heavy guns, except by an unknown and secret path. This secret way was known to Donogh O'Brien and he led the English army by it to the river banks on which they were enabled to erect their batteries and attack, at short range, the nearest and strongest of the bridge towers. But their efforts were fruitless. The batteries made no impression on walls thirteen feet thick, nor was it until the broken arches were daringly spanned by ladders, and the English were thus able to assault the defences and the defenders at close quarters, that the Irish garrison retreated and the bridge and its towers fell into the enemy's hands. The bridge was broken down, O'Brien's territory was thus cut in two, for he was denied access to East Thomond, there was much jubilation on the English side and Gray expected honors and congratulations, and was disappointed at the congratulations being so few.||

\* I assume that the castle in question is that which is marked on the county maps, in the County of Limerick, not far from the right bank of the River Mague.

† *State Papers*, Vol. II., p. 351.

‡ The Council in their letter to Cromwell declared (August 9th), that the like "had not been seen in this lande." (p. 351.)

|| "If others being in the same rome before me had don the 10th part which I have don the same had been largely dilated and highly praised." (*State Papers*, Vol. II., pp. 385, *et seq.*—Gray to Cromwell.)

Flushed with these triumphs, he would have wished to boldly march into West Thomond and encounter and, perhaps, defeat O'Brien, or at least terrify him into submission, but the fruits of his victory were soon lost. Some of the English soldiers mutinied, and when he commanded them to do anything they cried out together, "let us have money and we will do it." And so menacing was their conduct that he had to turn his guns on them and protested he was in danger of his life\* and he had to return to Dublin being unable to follow up his success. The fortress of Carrigogunnell was soon betrayed to the Irish, as O'Brien's Bridge had been betrayed to the English, O'Connor of Offaly was in open revolt, the Deputy and Ossory commenced to quarrel, neither Desmond nor O'Brien would submit nor surrender young Gerald Fitzgerald; and the King angrily demanded, in the following year, how it happened that O'Brien's Bridge with its towers was again built up and was once more a menace to the English possessions east of the Shannon. He bluntly blames the unfortunate Deputy for his negligence, and appointed a commission, of which St. Leger was chief, to proceed to Ireland and sit in judgment on Gray and the other Irish officials and find out how their duties had been discharged.†

Against Brian O'Connor of Offaly the English were especially incensed, for he had not kept his pledges with the government at Dublin, nor paid his stipulated tribute. For these reasons Gray entered his territory (1537), compelled, on his march, Mageoghegan and O'Mulloy to join their forces with him, then attacked and captured O'Connor's castles of Brackland and Dangan, wasted most part of his territory, destroyed the corn, demolished his fortresses, chased the unfortunate chief into Ely O'Carroll and handed over Offaly to Cahir O'Connor, who, in relation to his namesake and relative, had been a traitor and a spy.‡ And the Irish Council recommended Cromwell to have Cahir made Baron of Offaly, for then the Irish will so hate him || that he will be compelled by necessity to be faithful to the English, as he will have to rely on their support. From Offaly, Gray proceeded to MacMurrough's country, took two castles of the O'Nolan's, and compelled the Kavanaghs to give new pledges of good behaviour. This done, he entered and wasted O'Carroll's country, because he had befriended Brian O'Connor. O'Carroll had to submit, as also did Magillapattrick and O'More of Leix, both of whom, in addition, had to aid the Deputy in

\* *State Papers*, p. 355:

† *Ibid.*, p. 462.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 440-1.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 444. This shows that the Irish did not yet *love* the English, though they certainly feared them.

his war.\* At last, O'Connor was reduced to that condition of misery that he was going from one to another of his old friends to have meat and drink and was more like a beggar than a captain or ruler of a country.† Harassed on every side, pursued from one place to another, driven to desperation, Brian O'Connor made offers of submission and was willing to accept any condition from the English. But they would give him no terms, and at last getting some followers together, he re-entered Offaly, drove his brother Cahir out, and when he was again attacked by the Deputy and driven into O'Doyn's country he soon returned and intrigued with his brother, Cahir, who began to desert the English, as they began to distrust him. And St. Leger in his letter to Cromwell expressed his disappointment at this desultory and endless warfare, tells him that Offaly is much easier won than kept, and concludes with the observation that, as to O'Connor's assurances, there is no more trust in him than a dog.‡ But a little later, moved by policy more than love of Brian O'Connor, that chieftain, having come to Dublin and acknowledged in the fullest manner that he was the King's subject and abandoned the Pope and promised to pay a tribute to the English out of Offaly, was taken by them into favour. By the end of 1538, in one province at least, English power had become predominant. The MacMurroughs no longer received their Black Rent from Dublin, but instead paid tribute to the Deputy for their possessions, as also did O'Toole. The Mageoghegans had fought with the English to overawe the O'Mores and the O'Connors. Magillpatrick, the adherent of Lord Ormond, had renounced the Pope in order to purchase the favour of the government at Dublin. And the once dreaded O'Connor, whose ancestors had so long menaced the Pale, trembled for his possessions and even for his existence at Offaly; and O'Carroll agreed to pay the King's representative twelvepence for every ploughland he held, to cut passes and make roads through his territory for the passage of English troops, and to aid the Lord Deputy in his wars. ||

If Leinster was Ireland, then the conquest of the country might be said to be achieved. But the state of the other provinces was very different from that of Leinster. In the south, the MacCarthys and Desmond were still strong; west of the Shannon O'Brien maintained his independence and his strength; the Connaught chiefs ignored the government at Dublin and

\* *State Papers*, Vol. II., p. 468.

† *Ibid.*, p. 474. (Gray's Letter to Cromwell.)

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 536. This seems meant for Cahir, as well as for Brian.

|| *Ibid.*, Vol. III., p. 15.



disregarded its power ; and the resources of O'Neill and O'Donnell were never greater. That all these chiefs were in alliance for the protection and defence of young Fitzgerald was ominous for England ; but that the alliance should assume a religious character and put forth its strength in defence of the ancient faith, as it threatened to do, was more ominous still. Both O'Neill and O'Donnell were at peace with the Deputy, but their sincerity was suspected, and not without some reason. They were in correspondence with the King of Scotland and probably also with the King of France ; they regarded Henry as a heretic,\* and, in common with the vast majority of their countrymen, objected to him as such. O'Neill in particular had been specially appealed to by the Pope to defend the ancient religion and he wished to respond to an appeal so flattering to his pride.† He made peace with O'Donnell and these two chiefs who had so seldom agreed were now ready to do battle side by side. Early in 1538, the Deputy entered Farney in South Monaghan and plundered that district because its chief, MacMahon, violated his engagements with the English, and this must have been unwelcome news to O'Neill, for MacMahon was his neighbour and his tributary. A little later Gray attacked O'Reilly.‡ Early in the following year, he went to Dundalk to parley with O'Neill and O'Donnell, and when these chiefs did not appear, he wasted the district round Armagh, and he lamented that the weather was so bad he could not do O'Neill much harm.|| Determined to revenge all these outrages, the two northern chiefs mustered all their forces, burst into the Pale, ravaged and plundered Louth and Meath, and were proceeding south to Tara to join hands with their southern allies—O'Brien and Desmond—when the news reached them that the vigorous Deputy was marching to encounter them. They hastily retraced their steps, and, at Bellahoe,\*\* on the boundary between Meath and Monaghan, Gray overtook them. Loaded with spoil the northerns were attacked, unprepared and in disorder, and were severely defeated. The booty was lost, many of the army were slain, and the vanquished retired to their own territories ; and Gray then turned into Down and captured several castles from Magennis and Savage.†† Early in the next year (1540), he entered Tirowen occupied Dungannon and

\* *State Papers*, Vol. III., p. 140.

† Leland, Vol. II., pp. 172-3. The appeal was made to O'Neill through the Bishop of Metz.

‡ *State Papers*, pp. 3-24.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 133.

\*\* Four miles from Carrickmacross. (*Your Masters.*)

†† *State Papers*, Vol. III., p. 155.

fell to preying and burning O'Neill's country at which he continued for the space of six days.\*

During these years Gray's activity was not confined to Ulster or to Leinster. Taking with him some troops from Dublin and accompanied by Lords Gormanstown and Delvin, Darcy, Birmingham, O'Connor of Offaly and O'More, each with some followers, he set out (June, 1538), on an expedition which might easily have proved disastrous and which only the want of unity, or even of spirit, among the chiefs prevented from being so. Through O'Molloy's country he passed into Ely O'Carroll, thence onward to Limerick, crossed O'Brien's Bridge, which had been partially rebuilt and which he again broke down, then through Thomond and Clanrickarde's country on to Galway, returning through Hy-many and O'Madden's country, thence across the Shannon into Westmeath, and finally reached Maynooth, where he rested.† Except O'Brien of Thomond, all the chiefs through whose territories he passed gave him pledges of submission, and whenever there was any hesitation about yielding he attacked and captured their castles. To proceed among hostile chiefs and into unknown districts, so far distant from Dublin, and with so weak an army as he had, was an act of reckless daring.‡ But his audacity stood him in good stead, and such was the terror that he inspired, that no chief had the courage to attack him. Even O'Brien allowed him to capture some of his castles, though he might easily have fallen on him and destroyed him. In the next year (1539), the Deputy went south on a similar expedition and received the submission of those chiefs in the neighbourhood of Limerick and Cork.||

Gray's energy since he came to Ireland was conspicuous. His capacity and daring were of the highest order; he was not scrupulous as to means; and no Deputy who went before him succeeded so well. There was not an Irish leader—native chief or Anglo-Irish lord—who did not fear him; the narrow limits of the Pale had been generously enlarged, and no longer was it confined within that protecting rampart behind which the subjects of England cowered, and outside of which "they durst not peep."\*\*\* Gray's zeal for the interests of his royal master could not be called in question. Yet his zeal and his services

\* *State Papers*, Vol. III., p. 183.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 57-62.

‡ His having escaped was attributed to the fact that he was the uncle of young Gerald Fitzgerald. It is otherwise hard to understand the inaction, it might be said the cowardice, of the chiefs. (*State Papers*, p. 62, note.)

|| *Ibid.*, Vol. III., pp. 164-7. (Letter of Ormond to Cromwell.)

\*\*\* *Campion's History of Ireland*, p. 6.

were soon forgotten, and like Wolsey, ten years earlier, he was destined to discover how fickle was the favour, how shallow and transient the gratitude of his king. During his last years in Ireland he quarrelled often and seriously with the Earl of Ormond\* and the Earl's son complains that he is the Earl of Kildare newly born again.† He treated the Council at Dublin with disdain and though bound to consult with them, he rarely did so, and they were not slow to accuse him.‡ Archbishop Browne complained that he was still clinging to the Papal supremacy, and on every side the accusation was made, that because he was young Gerald Fitzgerald's uncle he allowed the boy to escape. Henry did not seem at first to put faith in these stories and would not relieve Gray of his office and allow him to proceed to England, but after a time the necessary permission was given and Gray returned to England. Then Henry began to suspect the late Deputy, and in his mind suspicion and guilt differed little. It was felt in Ireland that Gray was a fallen man; his enemies took courage; the accusations against him fell thick and fast; and the Irish Council solemnly charged him that, because of his connexion with the Earl of Kildare, and blinded by affection for that family, he had favoured the King's enemies, he had harassed the King's friends, he had released prisoners committed by the Council for treason, and he had maintained O'More's sons to rob and spoil the king's subjects. By Henry, he was already judged guilty, but the farce of referring his case to Parliament was gone through; he was quickly attainted of high treason, and in June, 1541, was executed at Tower Hill. ||

When Gray was leaving for England (April, 1540), Sir William Brereton was appointed Deputy, and he was not long in office until a report gained currency that there was to be a general muster of the Irish, at Fore, in Westmeath. With all the forces within the Pale Brereton marched to meet the Irish, but when he arrived at Fore he had no enemy to encounter. The Irish were not there, and there is no reason to think that they ever intended to be. But to gather together so many, to bring together the whole forces of Dublin and Drogheda, to take the judge from the bench and the learned man from his books, and the farmer from his plough, and yet have no fighting to do was at least disappointing.\*\*\* "Whereupon," says Brereton and

\* This was Ossory to whom the title of Ormond had been restored in 1538.

† *State Papers*, p. 32.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-9.

|| *Ibid.*, Vol. III., p. 263:

\*\*\* *Ibid.*, pp. 224-5. (Letter from the Council to Henry VIII., July 25th 1540.)



the Council, "we resolved to do some exploit," and, turning into Offaly, they cut down the corn, demolished the castles, burned the houses, and left the whole district desolate and bare. O'Connor gave them no provocation, it was not suggested that he did, yet, the Deputy complains that he remains still in his cankered malice and rancour, for it seems that while his lands were laid desolate and his people plundered, he was expected to be thankful to the dispoilers. Nor did Henry censure Brereton, on the contrary he commended him. O'Connor had been the friend and ally of Fitzgerald and as such the King's mind was embittered against him. But though he commended Brereton for his activity, he did not retain him at the head of the Irish government, and almost immediately appointed Sir Anthony St. Leger as Lord Deputy.\*

The new Deputy was no stranger in Ireland. Three years before (July, 1537), he had been appointed by the King as head of a Royal Commission to report on the general condition of Ireland.† He had looked into the state of the revenue, gone carefully round the Pale, visited Waterford, Kilkenny and Tipperary, noted the conduct of the royal officers from the highest to the lowest, parleyed with the Earl of Desmond, and carefully estimated the strength and dispositions of the native chiefs.‡ And the reports he sent to England impressed the King favourably as to his capacity. Among the English officials in Ireland he had heard the suggestion made, repeatedly and persistently, that no quarter should be given the Irish, that they would never submit voluntarily to the English nor keep any promises they made, that they should be effectually crushed and that a beginning might be made with the Leinster clans—the MacMurroghs, O'Byrnes and O'Tooles, whose district so vexatiously intervened between Dublin and Waterford, and thus destroyed the symmetry of the Pale. || And their suggestion was that the Irish be driven from the district and English colonists planted in their stead. Such a policy St. Leger was unwilling to pursue. Apart from its barbarity, it might fail, and even success was little better than failure. He had already seen in the case of Offaly that it was easier to conquer than to hold it; the same difficulties would arise with the MacMurroghs and their neighbours. These clansmen loved their fields and would

\* He arrived in Dublin on the 12th of August, 1540. (*State Papers*, Vol. III., p. 227.)

† *State Papers*, Vol. II., pp. 452-63.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 510-549. (Various letters and reports.)

|| *Ibid.*, pp. 498-505, 557. Ormond was sure that it was "the highest enterprise to destroy the Kavanaghs (MacMurroghs)" (p. 557.)

not be driven forth, or extirpated, without a desperate struggle ; their mountains and passes were favourable to guerilla warfare ; and amid these natural barriers they could long hold out against a powerful army and might drive them back, baffled and defeated. And there was the danger that the clans in the other provinces might come to the assistance of their countrymen. A policy of wholesale robbery and murder such as this would involve great risks, it would drain the English Exchequer dry, and to such a policy Henry, as well as St. Leger, was averse. For he did not want to reign over wasted fields and ruined homes. St. Leger resolved to try what conciliation could do, and he found that it was more effective than force.

The time was propitious for such a policy being tried. Both O'Neill and O'Donnell had already made overtures to the King and professed their willingness to become his loyal subjects. The unity between them was of short duration. Their mutual suspicion and distrust was not of recent but of ancient growth, and the defeat of Bellahoe and the recriminations which followed served to revive and intensify ancient jealousy and ancient enmity. Nor did the southern chiefs—Desmond and O'Brien—care to link their fortunes with the defeated and divided northerns. A general distrust arose, the various leaders, seized with panic, became anxious to secure their own personal interests, and, like a beaten and retreating army, it was let every man look to himself. MacMurrough agreed to renounce his chieftaincy and his name, and, content with the name of Kavanagh, to accept a grant of land from the King, and to adopt English customs and English laws. The O'Tooles and the O'Byrnes were glad to receive their lands on the same condition.\* The Earl of Desmond, no longer sulking in his tent, came to Limerick to meet the Deputy, made the most ample form of submission on his knees, renounced the privileges which his ancestors had enjoyed for a century, and consented to attend the King's Parliament as the King's loyal subject. And he hospitably entertained the Deputy at his castle at Kilmallock.† A Parliament held at Dublin (June, 1541), was attended by Desmond, by Magillapattrick, created Lord of Upper Ossory, by O'Reilly in person and by deputies on the part of MacWilliam Burke and of O'Brien of Thomond. For the first time, English lords and Irish chiefs sat side by side in Parliament, and, with the assent of all, Henry VIII. was proclaimed and acknowledged King of Ireland. And such was the enthusiasm in Dublin, that on the following Sunday, bonfires were lighted, wine was

\* *State Papers*, Vol. III., pp. 267-71:

† *Ibid.*, p. 286.

abundantly consumed in the streets, great feasting was in the houses, and a solemn Mass and Te Deum was sung by the Archbishop of Dublin, "with great joy and gladness to all men."\* O'Donnell was not present, either personally or by deputy, but he soon after made submission like the other chiefs and Henry agreed to make him an Earl.† O'Neill was the last to turn his back upon the past. The descendant of the ancient Ardris, he was reluctant to abandon his inheritance and to descend to the meaner position of being a mere subject to a foreign king. Like the swimmer on the river bank, he long shivered in hesitation to make the final plunge, but the plunge was made at last, and he was content to accept his lands from Henry with the honours of an Earldom. He petitioned to be created Earl of Ulster, but this was refused, and finally he became Earl of Tirowen, his son being created, at the same time, Baron of Dungannon. These honours were conferred at Greenwich (October, 1542), in the presence of Henry and his court, and with great pomp and splendor. In the following year, at the same place and with similar pomp, O'Brien was created Earl of Thomond, his nephew, Donogh, was made Baron of Ibrickan and MacWilliam Burke was made Earl of Clanrickard.‡ O'Reilly was to be created Viscount Cavan, O'Connor, Baron of Offaly, O'Donnell, Earl of Tirconnell, while the lesser chiefs, such as Magennis, Savage and others, were made knights, a distinction with which MacNamara of Thomond was ill-satisfied, as he begged hard to be created Lord of Clancullen.||

These Irish chiefs, now turned into English lords and knights, were to hold their lands from the King by Knight's service; they agreed to pay him a yearly subsidy, or, failing this, to reserve within their own territory some lands for the King's special profit. The religious houses in their territories were to be suppressed and handed over to the King's use. The King's writs were to be respected, his officers aided in the execution of their duty, the greater lords were to win over to the King's peace the lesser chiefs in their midst; the English mode of inheritance was to supersede the old system of Tanistry, and English law and custom was gradually to take the place of Irish customs and Brehon law.

With these changes the clan system could not last, and it was indeed time that it had disappeared. Under such a system progress was impossible. The peasant would not drain or fence

\* *State Papers*, Vol. III., p. 305.

† *Ibid.*, p. 318.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 428.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 450.



his land nor improve the character of his dwelling, as the law gave him no permanent interest in it, and men will not sow that others may reap. His life was the pastoral one, easy, careless and free, an unsettled and nomadic one. There was no incentive to thrift, for the exactions of coshery and bonaght and the rest were such that the savings of a year might be dissipated in a single night. And if the chieftain of his own clan did not oppress him with these multiplied exactions, he was always liable to have his house attacked and his lands laid bare by the chief of some neighbouring clan, bent upon earning distinction by the plunder of other clans than his own. It was considered beneath the dignity of a chief or of one of his blood to engage in trade or commerce, or to descend to manual labor. The number of these idlers was large, the ambition of each was to earn military distinction, and, having nothing to do, they were ready on every pretext to engage in war. The tanist system of succession left everything uncertain. The headship of each clan was open to the aspiring and ambitious ; it is seldom such were wanting, and as the clans were so numerous it is seldom the country was free from war. Ireland, in the sixteenth century, still clinging to the clan system, was still a portion of antiquity, its peasants idle, the lands untilled, the houses primitive and rude, the chiefs quarrelling ; and a race of the highest spirit and intelligence, in wealth and commerce, in the comforts and refinements of life, was far outstripped by other races even less gifted than they were. Stagnation was certain while the clan system continued, yet age after age passed and century followed century, and that system, like the barren fig-tree, still cumbered the earth.

When the change came it was effected by a stranger, and from without. It would have been better if it had come from within, if it had been the work of someone of the same race and language as the people themselves. But it seemed hopeless to expect that such would be. The clan system was severely aristocratic. Between the peasant who tilled the fields and herded his flock, and the chief who did nothing but go to war there was an impassable gulf. There was no middle class, hardly any towns, especially among the old Irish, and for one of the lower, or peasant, class to rise to leadership and play the role of reformer was impossible,\* for the chiefs would scorn to follow his lead, and the people would not follow without their chiefs. Even

\* This is not all inconsistent with considerable freedom in the social intercourse between chiefs and people, but it is the freedom between a master and a servant of the same family as himself on whose fidelity he knows he can rely:

a chief who exhibited reforming zeal would be met with many difficulties. The Brehon would solemnly warn him that these institutions, political and social, were handed down to them by their ancestors, and the Bard was ready to sing the praises of a system which had survived the shocks of fifteen hundred years. A strong man might have despised the solemn warning of the Brehon and the rhapsodies of the Bard, but this was not enough. He should have, besides, many of those very qualities which his fellow chieftains lacked, strong will, great intelligence, the instinct and spirit of a commander; he should be patient, persevering, knowing his own mind well, with a fixed, well-defined purpose, and ready to crush anyone and everyone that stood in his path. Such a leader both chiefs and people would have followed. And they would have supported him, when he taught them to build towns and engage in commerce, and plough the sea in their ships and grasp from the waves the wealth they contained, and mingle with foreign nations and learn from them, and abandon institutions which were centuries too old, and under which no nation on earth could prosper. Reformation from within required some such man. No man of moderate talents would suffice—among the O'Donnells and O'Neills, and O'Briens and Fitzgeralds there were many such. The nation cried aloud for a man of genius, but five centuries rolled by since Brian died at Clontarf, and not one such Irishman appeared.

A bad man may sometimes do good, and when he does, he deserves credit, and it cannot be said that in effecting the changes he did in Ireland, Henry VIII. was unnecessarily harsh. From the tyrant whose hands were ever dripping with the best blood of England, and whose cruelties raised him to the same level as Nero or Domitian, kindness or consideration is the last thing the Irish might expect. Yet he showed both, and his policy and acts in Ireland are in marked contrast with his policy and acts in England. The suggestions of his officials at Dublin that the Leinster clans were to be exterminated or banished, he rejected with emphasis, even O'Connor of Offaly he forgave and honoured, and old Turlogh O'Toole,\* who desired to see him, he treated in London with marked kindness, protected him against the rapacity of his Irish officials, and watched over

\* This Turlogh had declared that he would not make war on the Pale, as long as the great lords—O'Neill and O'Donnell—were at war with the English; on the contrary he would assist the Deputy, but as soon as the great chiefs were at peace then he would make war on the Deputy himself, "which promise he truly kept" (says St. Leger.) (*State Papers*, II., pp: 267-8.)

his interests with something like paternal care.\* He had the good sense to see that in the more remote parts of the country, such as Connaught and Tirconnell, there was danger in using harsh or precipitate measures, and he was willing to allow time for the old order to be finally abandoned and for the new order of things to succeed. He was a tyrant, but in Ireland, and to those who submitted peacefully, his was a benevolent despotism.

The few last years of his reign were not marked by any notable Irish events. Of all the chiefs O'Donnell was the most active. He wasted Lower Connaught (1542), and insisted on being paid his rent by the chiefs. The same year he attacked the MacQuillans in the north. The next year he was at war with Maguire and with O'Doherty of Innishowen, and later still with O'Gallagher (1544). In this latter year, the Earl of Clanrickard died, and there were disputes about the succession, and the next year (1545), O'Rorke was at war with O'Kelly and Burke.† But these wars were local and temporary, and no national issue was at stake, nor did any chief care to measure swords with the King's deputy. And when O'More and O'Connor of Offaly did so, they were promptly driven from their territories and declared outlaws, and such was the terror of England's power that when these chieftains returned from their exile in Connaught (1547), and attempted to recover what they had lost, no Irish chief dared give them help or protection, or even food.‡ At last the native chiefs felt they had a master whom it was not so difficult to serve, but whom it was dangerous to provoke and fatal to disobey. It is not surprising to be told by the *Four Masters* that "at this time the power of the English was great and immense in Ireland ; " || it is more surprising to learn from an Irish Annalist that the suppressor of monasteries was a good king.\*\*

The Irish were cowed, but they were not yet crushed. The strength of the various chiefs was still unimpaired, and if the government at Dublin became weak, and England became involved in some disastrous war, they might renounce their allegiance and turn to their ancient ways. The chiefs who submitted were certainly the most powerful, and the terms in which they submitted were as slavish as they could be, yet even such submissions did not necessarily involve the acquiescence of

\* *State Papers*, Vol. III., pp: 370, 395.

† *Four Masters*:

‡ *Ibid.* Ware's *Annals*:

|| *Four Masters*:

\*\* *Annals of Loch Ce*—"It is certain that there came not in later times a better King."



the whole people. When O'Brien was pressed to come to terms by the Deputy, he answered he was but one man and had to consult the various Dalcassian chiefs,\* and these chiefs were free to support him or not, and could only be coerced by force. The greater chiefs had renounced the supremacy of the Pope—a condition strictly insisted on by Henry—and had in some cases pleaded for a share in the plunder of the monasteries, but the lesser chiefs might not apostatise with equal readiness. They sympathised with the monks, driven out from their monasteries, and could not willingly acquiesce in a change under which such things could be. They had long believed, as part of their religion, that the Pope was in spiritual matters the head of their church, and they would not regard with favour dethroning him and putting a man of Henry's base character in his place. From such causes as these it seemed likely that trouble would come; and to the thoughtful it was evident that the conquest of Ireland was neither final nor complete

\* *State Papers*, Vol. III., p. 288.

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

### *The Reformation in Ireland.*

Unrest and discontent throughout Europe, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries—Wycliffe and the Lollards—The Church in Germany—In Ireland no general demand<sup>t</sup> for a change of doctrine—Fitz-Ralph of Armagh—Some abuses in the Irish Church—The Pander's description—The Fifth Lateran Council—Its decrees—Luther—Henry VIII., "Defender of the Faith"—His divorce—Act of Supremacy—The new doctrines in Ireland—Archbishop Browne—His conduct in England—Attempt to pass the Act of Supremacy in the Irish Parliament—The Opposition—Browne's arguments—The Proctors—The Act passed—Browne's preaching—His difficulties—His success—He undertakes "to pull down idols"—The monasteries attacked—The first martyrs—The new doctrines in the Pale—Apostacy of the native chiefs—Letter of O'Brien of Thomond—Obstacles to the spread of the new doctrines—Character of the Reformers—Browne and Staples—Lord Leonard Gray—Henry VIII.—His changes of faith—Constancy of the mass of the people.

IN the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries there was much unrest among the masses throughout Europe. Heavily taxed, oppressed by their feudal lords, their property and their lives squandered in repeated wars, their discontent was deep-seated and bitter, and only a leader and an opportunity were required to make them revolt.\* In England, Wycliffe had come into prominence, and his teaching attracted many and served to aggravate and intensify the existing discontent. Like many other reformers, he allowed his zeal to outrun his discretion, and not content with demanding liberty for the people, he attacked both the ecclesiastical and civil authority. And he attacked the doctrines of the church as well as its discipline. Against landed property in ecclesiastical hands, against pilgrimages, against episcopal and papal laws, against religious orders, against all these and more he preached, and he added that the Bible should be read by all, and that each was capable of interpreting it for himself. Though he was opposed to the friars, he adopted their simple dress. His followers, dressed in the same fashion, went among

\* Lingard, Vol. III., p: 141.

the people and preached to them, and exceeded even their master's vehemence and fanaticism. Both church and states feeling menaced by these attacks, united in defence. Wycliffe's followers were branded with the opprobrious name of Lollards, the severest laws were passed against them and were rigorously enforced; Sir John Oldcastle, the most prominent among them, was executed (1417)\*; the bones of Wycliffe himself were dug up (1428), and burned as the bones of a heretic; the gallows, the headsman's axe, the burning fagot ended the lives of many and intimidated the remainder; and long before the sixteenth century dawned, the Lollards as a sect having influence or power had ceased to exist. Transferred to Germany, Wycliffe's errors were planted in a congenial soil, and in large part supplied Huss and Jerome of Prague with the doctrines which they taught.† Nor can it be denied that the state of the church in Germany called loudly for reform. Bishops were appointed who had neither the vocation to the office nor its spirit. Belonging to the noble families of the Empire, they owed their position to family influence.‡ They were feudal nobles rather than ecclesiastics, idle, ignorant, voluptuous, making many and onerous demands on the people; their clergy caught the manners and imitated the conduct of their bishops; some of them held several benefices and discharged the ecclesiastical duties either by deputy or not at all, and laxness, irregularity and even worse had entered the monasteries. The residence of the Popes at Avignon brought them too much under French influence and lost them the affection and finally the allegiance of the Germans. The Great Schism, when a Pope and anti-Pope thundered anathemas against each other, scandalised the faithful; a series of Popes, worldly minded and ambitious for the advancement of their own families, made matters worse, and that the church survived the shock of such a Pope as Alexander VI. ought to convince even the most sceptical that she was built upon a rock by her Divine Founder, and had His assurance of indefectibility. The fall of Constantinople had driven many scholars west whose influence became great over the minds of men, and who were imbued with no friendly feelings towards the Church of Rome. In the study of antiquity which followed, the novelty and charm of pagan letters appeared and excited admiration and enthusiasm; scholasticism and orthodoxy became

\* Lingard, Vol. III., p. 253.

† Alzog's *Church History*, Vol. III., pp. 99-110.

‡ The following case is given by a contemporary writer—Albert of Brandenburg, brother of the Margrave, at 18 was Canon of Mainz, at 20 Archbishop of Magdeburgh, at 24 Archbishop of Mainz and Primate of Germany. (Lilly—*Renaissance Types*—pp. 256-7.)



unfashionable and gave way to flippant infidelity ; it became the rule to appeal to reason rather than authority, and like Plato to acknowledge its supremacy ; the lives of Popes and bishops and monks, their ambitions, their intrigues, their want of piety became the favourite subject of satire and epigram ; and when Luther appeared the materials were at hand for a mighty change.

Its insular position left Ireland out of the range of these influences. Its people, engaged in pastoral occupations, held little commercial intercourse with the Continent. Its scholars no longer went to teach in foreign universities, nor did foreigners come to learn in Ireland, for the glory of the Irish schools had passed away. Even the eastern portion of the country, which was largely leavened by English influence and in frequent communication with England, was little, if at all, affected by Wycliffe and his followers. The whole nation firmly held by the ancient faith, and though there were many things in the church which would bear improvement, there was no demand and no desire for a reform of dogma, whatever desire there might be for other reforms. Never once since the English came did any party arise with a demand for a change of doctrine, and the number of cases were few, where even individuals had any novel doctrines to propound. In the fourteenth century, one Adam Duff, one of the O'Tooles of Wicklow, publicly made some aspersions on the chastity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He was not a preacher and had no followers, nor was he permitted to hold such views with impunity, and in accordance with the laws of the time he was arrested (1328), and publicly burned as a heretic in Dublin.\* The same fate befell two men at Waterford, though what doctrines they held does not appear.† More serious than either of these was the condition of Ossory (1335), where some heretics taught that Christ was a sinful man and was justly crucified, that His Sacred Body was not to be worshipped, nor did they accept the Sacrament of the Eucharist nor the decrees of pontiffs.‡ They also consulted demons, and one of them, Alice Kettler, was executed at Kilkenny for witchcraft.

The most prominent person to come into conflict with the Church's teaching and to merit and receive its censures was FitzRalph, Archbishop of Armagh. || He was a native of

\* Grace's *Annals*.

† Mant ; *History of the Church of Ireland*, Vol. I., p. 21.

‡ Theiner ; *Vetera Monumenta Hibernorum et Scotorum*. (Letter from Benedict XII., to the King of England, 1335.)

|| Ware's *Bishops*. Stokes : *Ireland and the Anglo-Norman Church*, pp. 334-5.

Dundalk, and, educated at Oxford, he became Chancellor of that University, and from that position was promoted to be Archbishop of Armagh. The mendicant friars were then active in the diocese of Armagh. Their power and influence roused the jealousy of the new Primate; perhaps they encroached upon his rights, at least they excited his anger, and in a series of sermons delivered in London (1356), he attacked the mendicant orders in general. He pointed out that Christ when on earth was always poor, that He never begged nor taught men to beg, but on the contrary that they ought not voluntarily to beg, and from this he deduced that voluntary poverty is not a necessary part of the rule of the mendicant friars, nor could they consistently with prudence and sanctity bind themselves by vow to perpetual begging. He did not object to their receiving what was freely offered them, but only that they should not beg. Their right to preach and hear confessions in his diocese he also disputed, but when the superiors of the Franciscans and Dominicans appealed to the Pope, judgment was given in their favour.\* Two centuries after Fitz-Ralph's death, the Reformers held a Synod at Dundalk, at which, under George Dowdall, the dead Primate was pronounced to be a saint, and it was directed that in the future the festival of St. Richard should be celebrated. In their eyes it was a merit that he had fought with the friars and been condemned by the Pope. By all he was admitted to be a scholar of eminence, his personal character was above reproach, but it was reserved for the Reformers of the sixteenth century to discover that he was also a saint.† He is sometimes considered to be, as a reformer, the forerunner of Wycliffe, but whatever his influence may have been in England he founded no sect in Ireland, and until the sixteenth century there was no party, such as the Lollards or the Hussites, and, after Fitz-Ralph, no individual appeared ready to depart from ancient and established beliefs or make them the subject of attack.

But while the unchangeable character of the nation's faith is thus established, it cannot be affirmed that the church was in a healthy condition, nor denied that abuses existed similar in some respects to those which existed in England and Germany. The Archdeacon of Waterford had to be dispensed by Pope Alexander IV., having held and still holding a plurality of benefices, Honorius IV. dispensed the Dean of Dublin for a similar reason, and Boniface found it necessary to appoint a commission to sit in judgment on the Archbishop of Tuam (1303), who, blinded by cupidity (*caeca cupiditate seductus*), had usurped

\* Stuart's *Historical Memoirs of Armagh* (ed. Coleman), pp. 107-8.

† Olden; *The Church of Ireland*, p. 307.

the see of Annaghdown and also of Mayo, and took possession of their revenues.\* Bishops were appointed through the influence of the English king † and were usually of English birth. They knew not a word of Irish, they were always zealous for English interests, and had no sympathy with the natives. The abbots and priors of monasteries were great landholders, some of whom lived in England, and those living in Ireland were like the feudal lords around them, sitting as peers in Parliament, and concerned more with temporal than with spiritual affairs. The clergy of Irish and English descent seldom agreed, and even the monasteries were often the scenes of such quarrels. In the districts still subject to native chiefs, the love of learning survived, ‡ and it was during the troubled times of the fifteenth century, that Augustin Magraidin continued the Annals of Tighernach, that MacFirbis compiled the Book of Leccan, and that Maguire of Fermanagh wrote the *Annals of Ulster*.|| But there was a falling away and a Papal Commissary who visited Clonmacnoise and described it (1515) shows how great was that fall. "On the right towards the east is a cathedral church almost ruined, unroofed, with one altar only, covered with straw, having a small sacristy with one set of vestments only and a brass crucifix. Here Mass is seldom celebrated."\*\* Among the people around the very name of its founder—St. Kieran—was unknown. To such a condition was that school brought whose fame once resounded through Europe. The churches in each clan, if they were favoured and protected by their own chiefs, became the objects of aversion and attack at the hands of some hostile chief, nor was it unusual for an invader to burn and destroy the churches of a territory through which he marched. These churches were in his enemy's province, and as such deserved to be attacked. When the fire and vigour of youth were chilled by age, when death approached and the shadow of futurity was cast upon his path, the influence of religion re-appeared, the chief's thoughts became of a more sombre cast, and not infrequently he donned the garb of a simple monk, and ended his days in a convent cell. But while youth and strength remained, his ambition was for war, and the influence of religion was powerless to restrain him from violence and sacrilege. The Pander attributes the disordered state of the country (1515) to the bishops and clergy, "for there

\* Theiner ; *Vetera Monumenta*;

† This fact is abundantly proved from the *State Papers*.

‡ Stokes ; *Ireland and the Anglo-Norman Church*, pp. 371-2. Ware's *Writers*.

|| Olden, p. 282;

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 287. (Quotation from Theiner.)



is no Archbishop, abbot or prior, parson nor vicar, nor any other person of the church, high or low, great or small, English or Irish, that preaches the word of God except the poor friars beggars."\* And when the disorders that prevailed are remembered, the conclusion is inevitable, that either the friars' utmost efforts were powerless to stem the tide of lawlessness, or that the zeal of the friars themselves had grown cold. Nearly four centuries after the days of St. Malachy, we are confronted with a state of things similar to what existed in his day, but in the sixteenth century no man such as Malachy appeared to take up the work of reform. And it never occurred to the Irish that a reformer would come from England, least of all that he would be found in the person of Henry VIII.

At the Fifth Lateran Council (1512), decrees were passed providing for a reform of morals and discipline. A plurality of benefices in the hands of a single person, concubinage of the clergy, and the excessive use of the study of pagan classics were all condemned.† But these measures were halting and insufficient, the existing evils were of long standing and of the gravest nature and required the most drastic measures, and there was no advantage in passing decrees without seeing that these decrees were enforced. Nor was it likely that such would be done under a pontiff such as Leo X.‡ The well-meaning within the church, who deplored the ills which existed and hoped for a reformation from within, were disheartened. The innovator, the daring speculator, the Christian who had the pagan rather than the Christian spirit, the bishop without learning, the priest without piety, the monk without morals—all these would regard a change to a stricter discipline and purer morals without enthusiasm and even with regret. The party who cried out for a change of doctrine and who were ready to break with the ancient church were hourly gathering strength, and they found a suitable leader in the person of Martin Luther. He was a monk but had none of the monk's humility,|| and as professor at Wittenberg he indulged in a boldness and freedom of speech not usual in one of his order. In his Address to the German Nobles he made good use of the abuses that prevailed in Germany—the vast sums of money sent from Germany to Rome, the benefices kept vacant and their revenues used by foreign bishops, the excesses in collecting money for indulgences committed by Tetzels and others. He pointed out how after

\* *State Papers* (Henry VIII.), Vol. II., p. 1; *et seq.*

† Alzog; *Church History*, Vol. III., p. 77.

‡ Roscoe; *Life of Leo X.*

|| Luther's; *Primary Works*, (Ware and Bucheim), p. 299.

all this the Germans were despised at Rome; the Emperor was but the satellite of the Pope; he roused Teutonic pride to shake off Italian predominance and among his own countrymen became a leader and a hero. He professed allegiance to the Pope,\* though he called the Popes Antichrists and wolves,† and he maintained that he was still in the church though he taught the novel doctrines that justification came by faith alone,‡ that ceremonies were useless and that there were only three Sacraments—Baptism, Penance, and the Eucharist.||

His attack on the Sacraments was vigorously replied to by Henry VIII. of England. Until the death of his elder brother, the King was intended for church preferment. He had a taste and an aptitude for theological discussion, and he replied to Luther so effectively that he was rewarded by the Pope (1521) with the title of Defender of the Faith, a title which succeeding English kings with strange inconsistency have ever since retained. In the ten years that followed, the faith of the monarch remained unchanged, but his morals did not improve. His queen was no longer young. Her amiable disposition, her lofty character, her faith, her constancy, her affection for the King were not lessened by time, but the bloom and freshness of youth was gone, and she was no longer able to hold captive the wayward affections of her husband. His animal passions were strong, he was impatient of the least restraint, his amours were many and diversified—and if Anne Boleyn were willing to be simply his mistress he would have never troubled about a divorce. But she was not willing to be Henry's mistress; her ambition was to be a queen, and the King, a captive to her youthful charms, pretended to have scruples about the validity of his marriage with Catherine, and petitioned Rome for a divorce. When his petition was refused by the Pope, he got his own creature, Cranmer, to pronounce the nullity of his marriage with Catherine, forthwith married Anne Boleyn, renounced the supremacy of the Pope and declared that himself was, under Christ, the supreme head of the church in England. The obsequious Parliament passed the Act of Supremacy (1534), recognising Henry as head of the Church and State, the oath of supremacy became the test of loyalty, and those who refused to take it were cast into prison, some of them starved there, others executed at the block, and not a few burned at the stake. Henry took his new position quite seriously and seemed to think that like the Pope he had the plenitude of spiritual power. He appointed Cromwell

\* Luther's *Primary Works* (Ware and Bucheim) p. 422.

† *Ibid.*; p. 356. (*Babylonish Captivity of the Church.*)

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 333.

|| *Ibid.*—*Short Catechism.*

Vicar General of the kingdom, conferred benefices, appointed bishops, granted dispensations and made it penal to hold any communication with Rome.

The first to accept the King's spiritual supremacy in Ireland was the Earl of Ossory and Ormond. Anxious to enjoy the royal favour, he knew that this was the most direct road to that end, and bound himself by indenture (May, 1534), that he would resist the usurped jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome and would assist the King's Deputy and officers to make an end of it.\* These officers, one and all, from the Deputy down, had to act as Ormond did. To take the oath of supremacy was necessary, if they were to be regarded as faithful servants or even loyal subjects. The moment they refused to do so their position was vacated, some hungry place-hunter stepped into their shoes, and their liberty, and even life, were imperilled. Fear rather than conviction induced the Anglo-Irish lords within the Pale to conform, otherwise their lands might be overrun by the Deputy and his soldiers, acting in the King's name and with the King's hearty approval. But none of them had any enthusiasm for the spread of the new doctrines, and Henry's main reliance in Ireland was placed on Browne, the Archbishop of Dublin. He had been Prior of the Augustinian Hermits, was greedy, grasping and avaricious, with none of the spirit of poverty which was characteristic of his Order, and bearing the restraints of his vows with such impatience, that when he came to Ireland he married. From the beginning he viewed Henry's break with Rome with pleasure. He was probably one of those who in secret had sympathised with the doctrines of Luther. He approved of Henry's divorce and of his marriage with Anne Boleyn, and perhaps it was he who performed the marriage service.† Attaching himself to Cromwell, he soon became his favourite and attracted the favourable notice of the King and, in 1534, was appointed one of two visitors who were to visit the various monasteries, report as to their state and induce or compel the monks to accept the King's spiritual supremacy. The Franciscan Observants and the Carthusians in London and in the south of England he specially tormented, visited them at all hours, argued with the monks, induced some of the weak-minded and lax to yield, made promises of preferment and favours to others, threatened the obstinate, and when they refused to change their faith and rejected his promises as they despised his threats, he had them turned out of the monasteries. Some were cast into prison, where they perished of hunger and

\* *State Papers*, Vol. II., p. 197:

† Gasquet; *Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries*, p. 51. (Note.)



ill-treatment, some were allowed to escape—destitute and fugitives—to France, or Scotland, or Ireland, while more than one—such as Forest—was burned at the stake.\*

In May, 1536, a parliament was summoned at Dublin by the command of the king, at which Archbishop Browne used all his eloquence to have these Acts passed which had been already passed in England. The opposition of Cromer, Archbishop of Armagh, was strong and persistent and was bitterly complained of by Browne, but after a time some of the desired enactments were passed—those regulating the succession of the Crown and some others. But when it was proposed to pass the Act of Supremacy, as had been already done in England, Browne and his friends had greater difficulty. The Archbishop's speech on the occasion has survived and is rightly characterised by his co-religionist, Mant, as more remarkable for brevity than for argument.† His point is that Our Saviour paid tribute to Cæsar, even though a pagan, so also did the Popes to succeeding Emperors, and, therefore, Henry, for even a stronger reason, being a Christian, was entitled to be acknowledged supreme both in Church and State, and "he who will not pass this act as I do is no true subject to his highness." Such reasoning as this could not have convinced even the most dull-witted. Our Saviour in His day and the Popes after Him paid tribute to pagan monarchs, not as ecclesiastical but as civil rulers, and had the martyrs of the Coliseum recognised the pagan Emperors as the head of their faith, they would never have been cast to wild beasts. The opposition to Browne was from the clergy. From each diocese two representatives, called Proctors, were sent to Parliament, and these formed part of the Lower House, and it is of them that Brabazon in his letter to Cromwell specially complains.‡ Threats were used against them, inducements held out to them, the Parliament was prorogued, but neither time nor threats, nor persuasion could alter their decision, nor purchase their assent; and at length it was enacted by Parliament itself, that Proctors had no legislative capacity, but were only advisers and counsellors.¶ When the Proctor's opposition was thus violently disposed of, there was no difficulty in passing the required Acts, for Cromer and the Bishops, and

\* Gasquet, pp. 52-59.

† Mant; *History of the Church of Ireland*, Vol. I., pp. 117-18. His speech was "distinguished more for its straight-forwardness, brevity and decision than for deep argument or rhetorical display."

‡ *State Papers*, Vol. II., pp. 316, 438-9.

¶ *Ibid.* These Proctors, "do temerarily presume and usurpedly take upon themselves to be parcel of the body—claiming that without their assent nothing can be enacted at any Parliament within this land."

abbots who had seats in Parliament were outvoted, and the Act of Supremacy was passed, as also an act giving the first fruits and twentieth part of bishops' and abbots' revenues to the crown.\* Such a Parliament, if the King demanded it, would have enacted with equal readiness that the religion of the State should be that of Buddha or Mahomet.

But an Act of Parliament cannot change the faith of a whole nation. It can punish individuals, but cannot affect their religious convictions. It was necessary to reach their understanding by persuasion and argument, and this Browne undertook to do, though he soon found that the task was beyond his capabilities. He had already told his friend Cromwell (1535), that Cromer, Archbishop of Armagh, had preached strongly against the King's spiritual supremacy and had laid a curse on those who would recognise it, that the bishops and clergy were in agreement with him, and, that, as to the people, they were attached to Rome, and were more zealous in their blindness than the saints and martyrs were in truth at the beginning of the Gospel.† Nor had he much success to chronicle, two years later, and so irritated was the King at his failure, that he wrote him an angry letter attributing the barrenness of his efforts to his pride and presumption—"delighting in we and us,"—reminded him sharply that it was he who made him Archbishop, and that he could unmake him with equal readiness and put another man of more virtue and honesty in his place.‡ This rebuke struck terror into the Archbishop, it made him, he said himself, "tremble in his body for fear of incurring his majesty's displeasure."|| And it appears to have roused him to activity, for Lord James Butler, writing to the King, early in 1538, speaks of the many predications of the Archbishop and of the success of his teaching, though our curiosity is left unsatisfied as to the particulars of this success.\*\* Accompanied by Allen, the Lord Chancellor, Sir William Brabazon, and Aylmer, the Chief Justice, Browne, in the early part of the next year (1539), made a circuit in the "four shires above the Barrow," to publish the King's injunctions, to preach the King's spiritual supremacy, and to pull down idols and extinguish idolatry and the authority of the Bishop of Rome.†† He first preached at Carlow, then at Kilkenny, afterwards at Ross, Wexford and Waterford, and finally at Clonmel. At this latter place the statement is made that two

\* *State Papers*, Vol. II., pp. 370-1.

† Ware's *Annals*, pp. 148-9. (*The Life and Death of George Browne.*)

‡ *State Papers*, Vol. II., p. 465.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 513.

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 564. (Letter, dated March 31st, 1538.)

†† *Ibid.*, Vol. III., p. 111.

archbishops and eight bishops took the prescribed Oath of Supremacy openly, and in presence of a large congregation.\* If this be true, the action of these bishops is in marked contrast with that of Cromer and the bishops of the northern province. In the Council's letter the names of the conforming bishops are not given, but we are left to assume that they were all bishops appointed by the Pope in the usual way and converted as a result of Browne's teaching. The omission of their names is strange, for Browne was not remarkable for modesty, and such striking success as this deserved to be related in all its details. But the names are given by a modern writer, and are—Butler of Cashel, Bodkin of Tuam, Milo Baron or Fitzgerald of Ossory, Comyn of Waterford, Coyne or Quin of Limerick, Hurley of Emly, Sanders of Leighlin, O'Coirin of Killaloe, Tirrey of Cork and Cloyne and Nangle of Clonfert.† Of these bishops, three owed their position to Henry VIII.—Bodkin, Tirrey and Nangle—and among them Bodkin was the only apostate bishop. As Bishop of Kilmacduagh, he had taken the Oath of Supremacy from Lord Leonard Gray (1538), and was appointed by Henry VIII.—but not by the Pope—Archbishop of Tuam. The others were priests who apostatised for a mitre, but they were never recognised by the Pope, who in each case had another bishop appointed—Hoveden in Cloyne and De Burgho in Clonfert.‡ Both Butler and Fitzgerald voluntarily surrendered monasteries—Athassel and Inistioge—of which they were priors, and perhaps Browne counted this sufficient conformity. Coyne of Limerick did take the oath from Lord Leonard Gray (1538), when passing through to Galway.|| Sanders is counted among the reformers,\*\* but of the others nothing is known, and in relation to the new doctrines, not one of them, except perhaps Nangle, could be called an enthusiastic witness. In their letter to Cromwell the Irish Council were therefore wise in not entering into particulars. To state vaguely that ten bishops were converted by a single sermon was imposing. It showed that Browne was zealous in doing the work of his royal master, and that the seed of the new doctrine which he had cast from him had not fallen upon rocky ground, but, on the contrary, had produced fruit a hundred fold.

In undertaking "to pull down idols" the reformers did not

\* *State Papers*, p. 117; (The Council to Cromwell), Browne is one of the signatories to the document.

† Bagwell; *Ireland under the Tudors*, p. 305.

‡ Ware's *Bishops*. *State Papers*, Vol. II., p. 516

|| *State Papers*, Vol. III., p. 59.

\*\* He is so counted, at least by Harris the editor of *Ware's Bishops*.)



confine themselves to words. Their master—Henry—had despoiled the churches in England and robbed the monasteries; his rapacity demanded the spoils of the Irish churches and monasteries as well; and his servants in Ireland proceeded to carry out his wishes with every circumstance of indignity and brutality. In Christ Church, Dublin, was that noted and venerated relic called the Bacal Jesu, or Staff of Jesus. Taken from Armagh in the twelfth century, it was deposited in Christ-Church, where for nearly four centuries it remained, still used as at Armagh to ratify solemn engagements, still guarded with jealous care; and such was the number of pilgrims from far and near who came to visit the church in which it was contained, and because it was contained there, that a special Act of Parliament was passed (1493), to guard them from being molested. Besides this sacred relic was a cross and a portable altar, to all of which miracles were ascribed.\* But neither age, nor the sacred associations connected with them, nor the veneration in which they were held by the people, could protect these relics from outrage. Browne and his co-reformers had them forcibly removed from the church, and to the horror of the people the Bacal Jesu was publicly burned. At Ballybogan, in Meath, an image of our Saviour on the cross, to which popular veneration was for centuries attached, was treated with similar indignity, and the statue of the Mother of God at Trim, which so many pilgrims visited and which was revered by all, was also given to the flames. The Lord Deputy Gray stabled his horses in the Cathedral Church at Down, and, it is thought, scattered the relics of St. Patrick, St. Bridget and St. Columba; he rifled the abbey of Ballyclare, near Galway, and took away all the rich ornaments from the principal church at Galway. A Royal Commission of which Browne was one was instituted (1539), the object of which was to search for all images and relics which were special objects of popular devotion, and these were to be broken in pieces or carried away.† And the Commission did its work so well that “there was not in Erin a holy cross or a figure of Mary, or an illustrious image over which their power reached that was not burned.”‡

As in England, the monasteries were the special objects of attack. The plunder of the English monasteries had filled the King's coffers to overflowing, but his greed was not yet satisfied, nor his hatred of the monks. Not satisfied with the thirteen

\* *Obits and Martyrology of Christ Church.* (Todd's Introduction.)

† Moran's *Archbishops of Dublin*, pp. 12-13: Hardiman's *History of Galway*, p. 239.

‡ *Annals of Loch Ce*, 1538:

monasteries suppressed by the Irish Parliament in 1537,\* Henry issued letters patent (April, 1539) directing Browne and his fellow-commissioners to suppress all the monasteries that had not yet been suppressed, or had not been voluntarily surrendered.† The gold and silver which they possessed—the crosses, chalices and altar vessels of every kind, were to be the King's special property, even the bells and lead of the roofs were melted down and sold, while the lands were either sold to the highest bidder or given to some royal favourite. Resistance to these decrees was futile, and many of the monks and nuns, realising such to be the case, surrendered their monasteries and convents voluntarily, and before 1539 had passed away, besides a large number of the smaller religious houses, there were suppressed, either voluntarily or by force, twenty-four monasteries of the higher class, whose abbots or priors had sat in Parliament as spiritual peers.‡ Those who voluntarily surrendered were to get a pension || at the discretion of the Commissioners; those who resisted were treated with severity and, in not a few cases, their lives were sacrificed. What promises were made, what arguments used, what threats uttered, what insults heaped upon priests and monks and nuns, we do not know, but it is possible to conjecture. Browne and his fellows did not differ much from Legh and Layton and Ap-Rice in England, and the State Papers exist to tell of *their* acts of wanton brutality.\*\* Nor do we know the full extent of the lives sacrificed, but we know what happened in the Trinitarian monasteries at Dublin, Limerick and Atharee; and the inference is warranted that what happened in other monasteries was not dissimilar. The Trinitarians of Atharee numbered forty-two. Warned that the King's officers were to visit them, they made their preparations, and distributed all their goods to the poor, and when they were summoned to take the Oath of Supremacy (February, 1539), one and all refused. Their superior declared on their behalf that "they recognised no head of the Catholic Church save the Vicar of Christ, and as for the King of England, they regarded him not even as a member of that Church but as head of the

\* *State Papers*, Vol. II., p. 370.

† Morrin; *Calendar of the Patent and Close Rolls*, pp. 52-53. The members of the Commission were Browne, Brabazon, Allen, Cowley and Cusake.

‡ Mant, Vol. I., pp. 158-160.

|| Morrin, pp. 55-9. Nearly 40 such surrenders are recorded. The pensions vary from £50 to 4 shillings. The former sum was given only to two—the Prior of Fore and the Abbot of St. Mary, near Dublin—the latter sum to David Busher of Inistioge (p. 61.)

\*\* Gasquet; *Henry VIII.*, pp. 79, *et seq.*

Synagogue of Satan." One of the royal officers drew his sword and with a blow cut off the head of the intrepid priest. Of the other members of the community some were cast into prison where they died from the injuries they received there, some were secretly murdered, and others were publicly hanged in the market-place. Their brethren at Dublin displayed the same constancy and gave the same answer to the same demand, the provincial being killed by a musket ball and another having his head cloven in with a stroke of a hatchet. Of the remainder, some at least escaped by flight. At Limerick, the coadjutor-bishop, O'Neill, was a member of the same Order. Instead of conforming, he courageously entered the pulpit and in the presence of the royal officers exhorted his congregation to reject the new doctrines as heresy, and excommunicated any of those who embraced them. It was thought unsafe to attack him in the presence of so many people, but the reformers sought him at his house on the same evening, and when he refused the Oath of Supremacy, a blow of a sword severed his head from his body. The Trinitarian monastery was attacked and robbed and the monks put to death.\* The other monasteries of the Order were treated similarly. Everything valuable was taken away, books and manuscripts were destroyed, even the buildings themselves often levelled to the ground. Under a Christian king and in the name of Christianity, the atrocities of Turgesius were revived.

These harsh measures wrought havoc and desolation on the monasteries and inflicted untold miseries on priests and monks and nuns, but the faith of the people remained the same. Agard, writing to Cromwell (1538), mournfully confesses that, except Browne, Brabazon, Ormond and one or two more of small reputation, there is none from the highest down who accepted the new doctrines.† And Cowley, writing a little later, informs him that the reformers are making small progress, that "the Papistical sect springs up and spreads abroad infecting the land pestiferously."‡ Even in Dublin, Browne had to complain that neither by gentle exhortation, nor evangelical instruction, neither by oaths taken nor by threats of sharp correction could he persuade or induce anyone, either religious or secular, amongst the clergy to preach the word of God, "or the just title of our most illustrious prince."|| The case was similar in Kilkenny, where none had embraced the new doctrines but Lord Ormond,

\* Moran's *Archbishops of Dublin*, pp. 22-27.

† *State Papers*, Vol. II., p. 370.

‡ *Ibid.*, Vol. III., p. 50.

|| *Ibid.*, Vol. II., p. 539.



and all the people were imbued with "an evil and erroneous opinion of the King's most noble grace."\*

Outside of the Pale it seemed as if the reformers would fare better. The vigour with which Silken Thomas was combated and the completeness of his defeat struck terror into the native chiefs. Unwilling to unite, they were separately unable to resist so skilful and enterprising a leader as Gray. The union of O'Neill and O'Donnell, which religion promised to make permanent and effective, did not long survive the defeat of Bellahoe, and one after the other the chiefs made their submission. Their only desire was for their own personal safety. Of the people they thought nothing. They greedily sought for favours and titles from the English king, grovelled in submission before his Deputy, took the Oath of Supremacy, and repudiated the Pope with a vigour and strength of language which was worthy of Cranmer or Cromwell. The first of these chiefs to submit was Magillapattrick of Ossory. The position of his territory so near to Dublin, and therefore so convenient for attack, rendered it prudent that he should placate the King's Deputy; his relationship with Lord Ormond† brought him within the range of that nobleman's influence; there was nothing heroic in his character; he was, on the contrary, selfish, timorous and time-serving, and abandoned the faith of his fathers because by doing so he purchased security of his lands and territory, and was to be made a baron of Parliament. The terms of his submission lack nothing in completeness. He recognised Henry VIII. as supreme head of the Church on earth, and he undertook to do all in his power to totally abolish and extirpate in his territory the usurped power of the Bishop of Rome.‡ O'Connor of Offaly soon followed his example, and, in March of the following year, bound himself by agreement with the Lord Deputy that henceforth he would not admit the jurisdiction or authority of the Roman Pontiff nor would he allow others to admit it when he could.|| The submission of O'More of Leix is dated the following August, and though not so explicit as O'Connor's, yet contains a recognition of the King's supremacy, as he styles him Head of the Church on earth immediately under Christ. The other Leinster chiefs acted similarly, in every case

\* *State Papers*, vol. ii., p. 562. (White to Cromwell.)

† He was Ormond's son-in-law.

‡ *State Papers*, Vol. II., p. 515. His submission is dated November, 1537.

|| *Ibid.*, Vol. II., p. 560. "Promittit se posthac jurisdictionem et auctoritatem Romani Pontificis non admittere nec ab aliis, pro posse suo, admitti, recipi, aut uti permittit."

recognising that the King and not the Pope was the head of their Church.\*

The distant and more powerful chiefs still refused to change the faith in which they were born and in which their fathers had died, and it seemed unlikely that O'Donnell and O'Neill, and O'Brien of Thomond, and Burke of Connaught, and the Earl of Desmond would act as the Leinster chiefs had done. But it soon became apparent that whoever built hopes upon their constancy might be likened to him who built upon the drifting sands. The Earl of Desmond, in humbly submitting himself to his dread sovereign Lord (1541), as supreme head of the Church, protested that he utterly denied and forsook the Bishop of Rome, and his usurped primacy and authority, and that he would with all his power resist and repress the same.† O'Donnell's apostacy soon followed, and its language is equally vigorous and un-ambiguous. By indenture, dated August, 1541, he renounced and abandoned the usurped primacy and authority of the Roman Pontiff, nor would he protect or defend or even permit any adherent of the Pope in his territory, but, on the contrary, with all diligence and zeal would expel them or reduce them to submission to the King.‡ Such was the language of Manus O'Donnell, the founder of the Franciscan monastery of Donegal. But a short time intervened until Con O'Neill also made his submission, and, in the same full and explicit terms as O'Donnell, renounced the usurped authority of Rome, and recognised Henry as the head of the Church.¶ He who had been appealed to by the Bishop of Metz, as the champion of the faith in Ireland, thus shamefully abandoned it. One of the last to submit was O'Brien of Thomond, and the terms in which he addresses Henry are those of the most abject, even sickening, servility. He calls him the most worthy of kings or emperors on earth living, submits himself in everything to the King's deputy, and protests that he must make, in addition, his submission to the King himself, whom he desires to see above all creatures on earth living.\*\* It was the

\* *State Papers*, Vol. III., p. 90.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 286-7. He took the oath to St. Leger, the Deputy (January, 1540), *on his knees*, and in presence of two hundred persons, including the Archbishop of Cashel and the Bishops of Limerick and Emly.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 318.

¶ *Ibid.*, p. 353.

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 345. It is worth while giving this letter in full. It will show the character of these chiefs, of whom O'Brien was not the worst: "Most excellent, myghtie, replete withe all verteus and grace, and moost redoubted Kinge and Emperour, undre God my ledge Lord and Vice Dei; moost worthie, above all Kinges or Emperours on yerthe lyvinge,

language of a slave in the mouth of a hypocrite and was a fitting prelude to his subsequent request that the religious houses in Thomond should be suppressed, and that he should be a sharer in the plunder.\* The conduct of the greater chiefs was universally copied, and both Anglo-Irish and native chiefs in all quarters of the country hastened to submit, and when they did, they were left in peaceful possession of their lands. Many of them, no doubt, were acting from fear, for they knew that if they did not submit and take the Oath of Supremacy they would be put down as enemies of the King, their property confiscated and their lives imperilled. Such sacrifices men have often made for their faith, but among the Irish leaders of that day there were no heroes, none who saw any attraction in a martyr's crown. As they had not the patriotism to forget their personal jealousies and animosities, and subordinate their personal feelings to the common good, and as they were thus rendered unable to defend their country's liberty, for a similar reason they were unable, and besides were unwilling, to defend its faith.

That these chiefs were sincere in taking the Oath of Supremacy, or that they meant to carry out the promises they had made,

to whom I, your moost bownde, obedient subject, Maurus O'Breyne, do onelie cum, as my moost bownden dewtie, lowlie submitinge my self unto your Excellencie, clerelie to yield unto your Grace, my bodie landes and goodes, with all and singular thinge or thinges quycke or deade, under Heavyn and above yerthe, and all maner of degre or dignytie that I have, or to me by anye meanys appertenithe or belongithe, into your Graces handes, therewythe to do your Gracys wyll and pleasure, as to my dewtie appertenithe, beinge now Your Gracys obedient subject, wiche at this howar, I moost hyghlie enjoye in, and moost sorrowe to me to remembre my longe tyme so yll spent for lacke of grace and knowledge, contrarye to Godes lawes and Your Graces. And althowghe before this, I have wyllinglie withowt coactyon or compulsyon of anye creature but only the advertizement of your Graces Deputy ther made lyke submissyon to Your Graces Depute now in Irland, and upon the same have my pardon undre Your Graces Great Seale of Irland, of the said good Lorde Deputie, yett my mind never satsfied, tyll I have done the same to Your Graces owne Person, whom I moost desire to see above all creatures on yerthe lyvinge, now yn myne old days ; *wiche sight I dowbt not but shall prolonge my lyff*. Moost humblye beseechinge your excelent goodness of Your Graces pardon for me and all myne ; and yn case, as God defend that all Irland shuld dysobeye from their dewties and alledgeance to Your Grace, yet shuld I, with all myne, lyve and dye Your Graces true faythfull and obedyent subjectes and servantes : and for the truthe herof to appeare, I to this poore rude and symple submyssion do sett my hande and seale, and with all my herte protest to the Lord God, here before Your Excellencye, and to Your Grace, to fulfyll the same yn all poyntes for ever." Under capable leadership the Irish could defend their liberties even against Henry VIII., but what could they do under such leaders as O'Brien and his fellows ?

\* *State Papers*, Vol. III., p. 398.



is in the highest degree improbable. The excuse has been made for them that they acted rather from ignorance than from malice, that they had no desire to play the role of apostates, and that in their eyes the substitution of Henry for the Pope as the head of their Church only involved a political change.\* But this assumes that they were all men of the densest ignorance, of the dullest understanding, and is not borne out by the State Papers of the time.† They conformed to Henry's religion, because they feared to irritate a despotic and powerful monarch, whose enmity in their divided condition meant their ruin. But they evidently had no desire to fulfil the promises they made, and although O'Neill and O'Donnell undertook to wipe out the jurisdiction of the Pope in their territories, yet the monasteries of Tirowen and Tirconnell were not interfered with, and long survived these chiefs, as well as Henry VIII. And even if the leaders throughout the land were prepared to inaugurate a crusade against the old faith, it is quite certain that the mass of the people were not prepared to follow their lead.

Protestant writers regard as the greatest mistake of the reformers that they did not address the people in their own language, and to this omission they attribute the failure of the Reformation in Ireland, at least in its initial stages. And, without doubt, the expectation seemed unnatural and absurd that a people would embrace doctrines which had not been explained to them, and which they could not therefore understand. In one of his letters to England, Browne declared that he would himself continue to preach in the English-speaking portion of the country, and that he would get his friend, Dr. Nangle of Clonfert, who could speak Irish, to preach in the exclusively Irish-speaking districts.‡ But this project was not carried out, for as Browne had failed so conspicuously in the district round Dublin, it was at least equally probable that Nangle would fail in the rest of Ireland.

The failure of Browne cannot be a matter of surprise, if we consider what were the characters of these first reformers. The force of example is strong, and personal character adds

\* This is Dr. Joyce's opinion. (*Short History of Ireland*, pp. 387-8.)

† Of the 16th century alone forty poets are enumerated whose surviving pieces amount to over ten thousand lines, a fact which shows a considerable amount of culture to have existed. (Douglas Hyde—*Literary History of Ireland*, p. 471.)

‡ *State Papers*, Vol. III., p. 123. Nangle was not able to assert himself in Clonfert, much less do missionary work elsewhere. When he showed the King's seal appointing him Bishop of Clonfert to MacWilliam Burke, that chief "threw it away and vilipended the same." Mant, Vol. I., p. 204; Olden, pp. 301-5.

much to what the preacher has to say. If the fishermen of Galilee had been vain and self-seeking, anxious for wealth and ambitious for worldly honors, they would have done little. They succeeded where Plato and Aristotle would have failed, because they were humble and meek, despising honors and wealth, facing dangers and enduring hardships with a readiness which demonstrated their sanctity and zeal, and performing miracles in support of what they preached, which demonstrated that their doctrines were true, and their Church the Church of Christ. Judged by these tests, Browne and his friend, Staples, and, above all, their master, Henry VIII., stand in no favourable contrast. In defiance of his vow of chastity Browne was a married man, in spite of his vow of humility he became so proud and presumptuous that he was specially reprimanded by the King, and he so far forgot his vow of poverty that he was not content with the ample revenues of the See of Dublin, but pleaded for his share of the suppressed monasteries, and when the monastery of Gracedieu,\* near Dublin, was not given him he considered himself an ill-used man. His fellow reformer, Staples,† had also broken his vow of celibacy, for he, too, was married. Nor did these two agree, but, on the contrary, the bitterest animosity existed between them. From a pulpit in Dublin, Staples publicly denounced Browne, called him a heretic and a beggar, and adjured his hearers to give him no credence, "for I tell you if you will in faith I will not":‡ and in a letter to St. Leger he gives his solemn assurance that every honest man was weary of Browne, and that pride and arrogance seemed to have deprived him of his reason.|| It was admitted that the sermons of these preachers were by themselves inefficacious to wean the people from their faith, and that these sermons should be supported by the Deputy's sword. And here, too, Browne was disappointed, for Gray, though he had taken the Oath of Supremacy, and had been guilty of many acts of violence, was said to be insincere, and even had a special zeal for the Papists, and when at Trim, to the disgust of the reformers, he went into the church and heard very devoutly three or four masses before the statue of the Blessed Virgin.\*\* He deposed Tirrey, the reforming bishop of Cork and put a Grey Friar in his place whom Browne calls a rank traitor.†† His reluctance to spread the

\* *State Papers*, Vol. III., p. 10:

† He was a native of Lincolnshire and was appointed Bishop of Meath in 1530. He was deprived of his See by Queen Mary in 1554. (Ware's *Bishops*.)

‡ *State Papers*, Vol. III., pp. 1-2.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 29.

\*\* *Ibid.*, pp. 96-103.

†† *Ibid.*, p. 124.

new doctrines was quickened by his personal antipathy to Browne whom he opposed and impeded in every way, entered his house at Dublin and took away some of his property, and when the Archbishop on one occasion called Cardinal Pole a Papish Cardinal, Gray in a great fume retorted by calling Browne a "poleshorn friar."\* Such was the hatred between these apostles of a religion which was founded primarily upon love. It is difficult to recognise in *them* the heirs and successors of those primitive Christians whose love for one another excited the admiration of the Pagans.

If we turn to Henry VIII., we shall not find, either in his personal character, or in the doctrines he professed, or in the manner in which he sought to propagate them, anything which would attract popular sympathy to the church of which he was the founder. The very embodiment of tyranny, like all tyrants he had become wayward and capricious. No one dared question his authority or dispute his will. His throne encompassed by slaves and sycophants, every prejudice was studied, every passion was flattered, every act was applauded. Those whom he favoured for the moment became temporarily endowed with every virtue, as those whom he hated, or even suspected, with every vice and with every crime; and every change in his conduct or opinions, which interest or caprice dictated, was regarded as an inspiration from heaven. When he married Anne Boleyn, an obsequious Parliament enacted it treason to question the validity of the marriage or the legitimacy of the offspring. When she was divorced and executed, the stigma of illegitimacy was attached to her child,† and when the King executed Catherine Howard, and divorced Anne of Cleves, the servile crowd of courtiers and apostates who surrounded his throne were ready with their applause. Placed at the head of the church, he seemed to think that, like the Pope, he was infallible, and going farther than the Pope he assumed the right to change his creed at will, and insisted that the nation should follow his example. At one time he showed a disposition to join hands with the German reformers and to accept the Confession of Augsburg (1530), which affirmed that justification came from faith alone, rejected the veneration and invocation of saints as well as confession, and denied transubstantiation.‡ A few years later, it was woe to those of Henry's subjects who held such doctrines. By the Six Articles (1539), it was decreed to be heresy to deny transubstantiation, confession was declared

\* *State Papers*, Vol. III., p. 209.

† Lingard, Vol. V., p. 36.

‡ Alzog's *Church History*, Vol. III., p. 235.



necessary for salvation; the only deviation from the ancient faith now remaining was that Henry still claimed to be head of the church.\* Those who denied that he was were condemned to be hanged and quartered as traitors, those who denied the Real Presence † were condemned to be burned as heretics; and it was not uncommon to see both classes led on the same hurdles to the place of execution.‡

To justify the suppression and plunder of the English monasteries the plea was put forth that they were dens of infamy, their occupants, lazy, useless, idle, ignorant and immoral,|| but in Ireland this plea was not maintained, and except Browne's statement that they were ignorant and attached to the Pope,\*\* nothing else was laid to their charge. These monks and nuns were of the same race as the Irish themselves—their manners, their language, their sympathies were the same. To the shelter of their monasteries the poor came for food and clothing which in these days no state-endowed institutions could supply, the sick were attended and relieved, the traveller found hospitality, the weary found rest, the sorrow-stricken was consoled, the sinner was welcomed to repentance, and the warrior, weary of battle, was solaced by prayer and religion in his declining years. These monks and friars preached the truths of the faith to the people, they educated their children, and across mountain and moor they brought the consolations of religion to the sick and dying, braving alike the inclemency of the weather and the terrors of some fatal disease. When their monasteries and convents were violently invaded, their property confiscated, themselves driven forth in beggary or, perhaps, murdered, every class of the community felt aggrieved.

The fate of the secular churches and secular priests cannot have differed much from that of the monasteries and the monks. These churches were robbed of everything they possessed. The vessels of the altar, the shrines of saints, relics, crosses, pictures and statues were either taken away or destroyed. In most cases the reformer's motive was cupidity, but Browne, in addition, had the fanaticism of the German Lutherans, and in reference to statues and pictures he was animated with the destructive spirit of the Iconoclast. Idols he called them,

\* Lingard, Vol. v., p. 64.

† This was one of the counts in the indictment against Cromwell—that he had led people to a disbelief in the Blessed Sacrament. (Gasquet; *Henry VIII.*, p. 154.)

‡ Lingard, Vol. v., p. 74.

|| Gasquet; *Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries*, cap. VII.

\*\* *State Papers*, Vol. II., p. 539. He blames especially the Franciscan Observants "which be worste of all others." *Vid.* also Vol. III., p. 7.

and the respect paid to them idolatry.\* With a keener intelligence than the reformers, the Irish were able to distinguish between the statue or painting and the person it represented. When a picture is set in a valuable frame or when flowers are placed at the base of the statue, it is not to the canvas or marble that honour is given. And when the people beheld a representation of a saint—of St. Patrick or St. Columba, or St. Bridget, of the Blessed Virgin, of the Infant Saviour resting on his bed of straw or nestling in the arms of His Mother, they thought of the saint's zeal, of the Virgin's sanctity, of the Saviour's love. The recollection was inspiring. They prayed not to the statue before them or to the picture which hung upon the walls, but to him whom it represented, and as they prayed they felt their faith grow vivid, their devotion increase and their charity was enkindled anew. The reformers confined their efforts to preaching, but in religion it is necessary to reach men's hearts as well as their understanding : and the invocation of saints, the honours paid to their relics or their shrines, the ceremonies and rites—which the reformers considered unnecessary—these will touch the heart and move the will, when preaching by itself may fail.

A religion which was avowedly novel, and above all whose high-priest was an English king, was certain to be regarded by the Irish with suspicion and ill-favour, but when it furthermore involved the destruction of churches, the suppression of monasteries and the murder of priests and monks and nuns, it was equally certain they would regard it with aversion and hate. There must have been many in Ireland, who wished well to England, and who hoped that Henry's attack on the Church was but a passing storm which, at least with his death, would subside. They knew that the people would not embrace the new doctrines nor abandon the old without a struggle, and if the efforts to change them were continued, then, for the first time, both Anglo-Irish and Irish would unite, and trouble and bloodshed and misery both for England and Ireland would ensue.

\* *State Papers*, Vol. III., p. 35.





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